

FROM THE MAKERS OF GIANT ROBOT - ASIAN POP CULTURE AND BEYOND

# ROBOT POWER

THE MAKE UP / SAM LEE / THE RAMEN GIRL / DOLEMITE  
NIKKI McCLURE / ROD STEWART / BILL BEAR

VERSION>

17.5  
US \$3





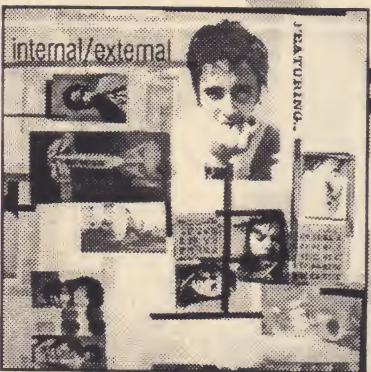
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# ► LAUNCH 17.5



What the heck are we doing? After a new issue of Giant Robot comes out (that's our "real" publication), we usually hibernate for a week or so before digging into the next one. Our hours are long, so that's when we try to remember what life was like before we headed into production. But after GR17, there were too many stories about the articles and too many things left unsaid that weren't going to make it to GR18. So we used our downtime to make Robot Power, a high-speed, low-profile outlet that flashes back to the garage style of GR1 and GR2. It's what we did on our winter vacation.

Surprisingly, the staple-and-fold photocopying method isn't cheap. Due to the low volume and lack of ads, it actually costs more to print a black-and-white, plain-paper Robot Power than a glossy and colorful Giant Robot. Even so, we found the resources to slam this out and get it into your hands. Slamming together a no-frills zine has been a shot in the arm for us publishing junkies, and we hope it is for you, too.

And in case you were wondering, our distributors didn't think it was okay to call this new mag Giant Robot 17 1/2. That's why we're calling it Robot Power. We tried to make it raw, fill it with energy and potential, and pack in a bullet to your head. There's plenty of punch in here whether you have GR17 or not, but it's better if you do since a lot of the articles refer to it. (We also mixed in some articles that don't quite fit into the traditional GR profile.)

So sit back, dig into the pages, and let us know what you think. If we get a decent response, maybe we'll release Robot Power on a quarterly basis.

## ► MASTHEAD

Robot Power 17.5 was made by Eric Nakamura and Martin Wong. Additional help was provided by Suemi Hiraoka, Bill Poon, Shawn Sites, Lisa Strouss, Angelyn Wong, and Daniel Wu. For any inquiries regarding advertising, ordering more issues, etc., write to us at PO Box 642053 LA, CA 90064, refer to the back pages for ordering info, or call us at 310-395-5218.

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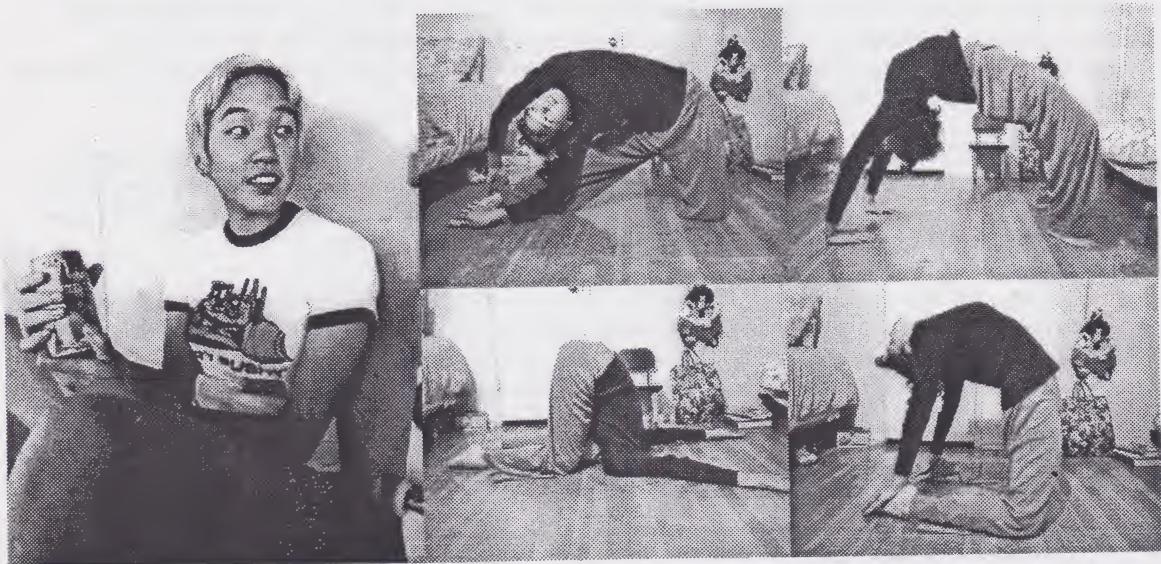


part one of the gr safari series

# ► WHO AM I?

by eric nakanura

**SHE'S EATEN BUGS, DRANK COFFEE, AND DID YOGA FOR GR**



Since the first issues of Giant Robot, there's been a familiar face. Angelyn Wong is her name. Whether she was skateboarding, testing soft drinks, gargling coffee, eating dessert, burning herself on hot sauce, doing yoga stretches, holding a rice cooker, modelling a t-shirt, or dunking, she's been there. Finally, you get to know her.



***“When I’m not in an issue, my friends ask me if I’m on good terms with you guys.”***

**GR: Do a lot of people recognize you from Giant Robot (GR)?**

AW: A friend of my boyfriend's asked him if he was going out with the "Giant Robot model." That's the first and only time I've heard that. One of his bandmate's friends thought I was a kickboxer. He confused me with Ming Tran.

**GR: What have your appearances in GR amounted to, if anything?**

AW: Nothing, really. When I'm not in an issue, my friends ask me if I'm on good terms with you guys.

**GR: Tell us about your stalkers and/or people you've busted who have had pictures of you.**

AW: My friend's younger sister was visiting some of her friends at UC Irvine and they ended up in this guy's dorm room. He had a poster-size picture of me on his wall. He's from my high school, but I never really talked to him. I wonder what he told people when they

asked who I was? Stalkers aren't so bad, though. I admit, I've done it. And my boyfriend stalked me for years before I agreed to go out with him.

**GR: Do you ever get gifts**



***"My mom dates old photos by the color of my hair."***



***from people who aren't so close?***

AW: Once this guy gave me a yellow "slippery when wet" sign.

***GR: Have you ever encountered Angelyn***

***wannabes?***

AW: A friend of mine used to copy every hair style of mine—until I started dyeing it.

***GR: What colors have you had your hair? For what duration?***

AW: Red, purple, fluorescent pink, blue, platinum blonde. Not all of them were intentional. Often, the description on the bottle was not what ended up on my head. My hair was not its natural color for about two years, a few months of each shade. My mom dates old photos by the color of my hair.

***GR: When was the last time you had long hair? What do you think about long hair on your head versus short?***

AW: Last June. Lately, I've fallen into the routine of growing it out until I can't stand it, then chopping it all off. My mom says it looks better short. Aren't moms always right?

***GR: Are you thinner than the singer of Pizzicato 5? Have you ever met her?***

AW: I'm about five times bigger (length and width) than Maki. I met her at a party a while ago. Konishi was passed out on a futon.

***GR: How deep are your dimples? Do people make comments on them?***

AW: Sometimes I store things in them. People always make

***"I still do yoga. It makes me flexible like a rubber band."***

comments. What am I supposed to say? "I know I have dimples" or "Thanks, I like them, too." I'm just glad no one ever called me a Cabbage Patch Kid—they had dimples like mine. I got mine from my grandmother, though.

**GR: Are you still doing yoga? What has it done for you?**

AW: I still do yoga. It makes me flexible like a rubber band. After

**flavor?**

AW: No. Ice cream is one of my favorite things. I don't know what I'd do if it gave me the squirts. I love Häagen Dazs coffee ice cream. Creamy and smooth!

**GR: Tell us about your other modeling experiences.**

AW: Besides GR (which I don't

AW: For money, I'm designing clothes for babies and toddlers. I'm going to start my own thing soon, though—bedding and curtains. For fun, I like to play videogames. The classic Bust-a-Move and Um Jammer Lammy's hot metal level are two of my favorites. I also snowboard, shop, eat, sleep, be lazy, see movies, sew, dance, rock out...

**GR: Tell us about your**



**"I just skated around, tried different beverages and hot sauces, did yoga, ate bugs..."**

class, I feel all rested and ready to take on the world. Either that or ready for hibernation.

**GR: How about skateboarding. What happened there?**

AW: Where I skate is secret.

**GR: Are you lactose intolerant? If you eat ice cream, what's your favorite**

really think of as a "modeling experience" since I just skated around, tried different beverages and hot sauces, did yoga, ate bugs...), I was paid a hundred bucks to do this cheesy mall fashion show. I had to wear stilettos, which I thought I'd never do.

**GR: What do you do these days? For money and for fun?**

**band.**

AW: Two of my girlfriends and I are in this band called The Bends—nothing to do with Radiohead, just a coincidence. We're kind of garage-y, I guess. Only covers so far because we're still learning how to play. We did an Internet show once. I think eight people watched.

**GR: Tell us about your trip**

**"I'M JUST GLAD NO ONE EVER CALLED ME A CABBAGE PATCH KID-THEY HAD DIMPLES LIKE MINE."**

**to Spain.**

AW: Actually, that trip was kind of a waste of money. We traveled too much and didn't stop to really experience where we were. Plus, I could hardly enjoy the trip with all my problems with the boy I was visiting there. But one of my favorite things was Gaudi's crazy architecture in Barcelona.

**GR: Tell us about your car accidents.**



**GR: Would you rather be shorter?**

AW: No.

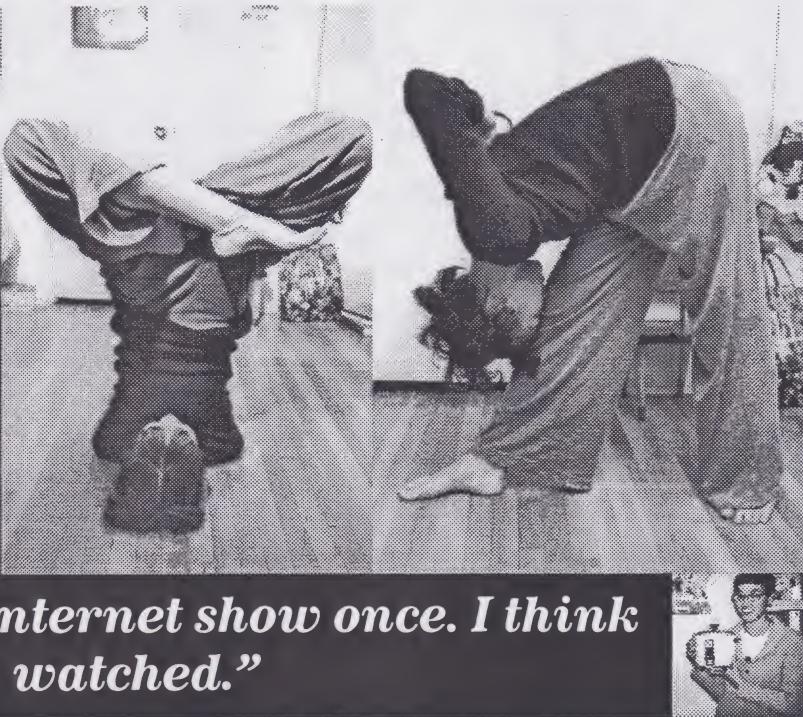
**GR: What are the best shows you've been to?**

AW: Madonna, The Go-Go's, Jawbreaker (Thanksgiving '94?), Superchunk, Pavement, 5-6-7-8's, Fugazi, and Rocket from the Crypt all do good shows.

Recently, I dug Don Caballero and

**Five Things Angelyn Hates:**

- (1) Movie theaters the size of my living room.
- (2) Snobby retail sales people who think they're the shit when they probably make less money than I do—and that's not much.
- (3) Mustard.
- (4) Sour cream.
- (5) Cottage cheese.



**"We did an Internet show once. I think eight people watched."**

AW: When I was first learning how to drive, I didn't even make it out of my cul-de-sac. I was turning right and couldn't stop. I ran into the neighbor's brick wall.

**GR: What have you noticed about yourself as you've gotten older?**

AW: I don't seem to age. People still think I'm in high school.

Jimmy Eat World. Burning Airlines rock. Arling and Cameron was super fun. Yo-Yo-a-Go-Go '94 was pretty bitchen.

**GR: Is it hard being you?**

AW: Sometimes, because I can't decide anything!



# ► DRUGS, DRINKS, GIRLS, AND GROUPIES

by martin wong

PHIL CHEN PLAYED BASS FOR ROD STEWART IN THE DISCO ERA



If you read Phil Chen's article in GR17, you were probably amazed to find out that he was in the first ska band to go from Jamaica to England in the '60s. Then you probably coughed up a lung when you saw the picture of him cheek-to-cheek with Rod Stewart on the last page of the article. Here's the scoop.

**GR: How did you wind up in Rod Stewart's band?**

PC: In 1973 I was jamming with the Doors in Jamaica. This was after Jim Morrison died. Robbie and John wanted me to join, but I had commitments. After that, Rod broke up with The Faces and needed a band. I auditioned and joined.

**GR: For how many albums and tours were you with Rod?**

PC: I did three albums with him. Actually four with the live one, but they didn't give me credit. I did two-and-a-half world tours. Then he fired us.

**GR: What was the best tour?**

PC: *Blondes Have More Fun*. Everywhere we went we were like kings—Japan, New Zealand, Paris, Belgium, Ireland. I think we played 12 nights at the Forum in Los Angeles.

**GR: Did you make decent money?**

PC: Well, decent, but not for what they made. You know? Coming from London, you get paid in US dollars which is like half. It was what I'd say is okay. For me it was a stepping stone.

**GR: What did you eat on tour? Was it hard being macrobiotic?**

PC: I usually ended up going to Chinese and Japanese restaurants. I'd get up at 6:00 am when those guys would be going to bed. I'd jog, take a book, take my gi and find a dojo to practice, then I'd go to a museum.

**GR: Were there a lot of drugs and girls around the shows?**

PC: Always drugs, drinks, girls, and groupies. In those days it wasn't something you had to contend with. I didn't partake in the groupie thing. It wasn't kosher.

**GR: Was there conflict between Rod's early rocker fans and his later disco fans?**

PC: Rod was very smart to have gone into disco. He had a hit, "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?" People said he was selling out, but Rod was very smart to change with the times.

**GR: Where did you get the cool clothes?**

PC: Well, we didn't have personal dressers like Rod. I went to Fiorucci in London and got this jumpsuit outfit made of satin. I told them who I was and they gave me different colors. With satin, after the show I could turn on the shower, shut the doors, and steam out the wrinkles. Later on, Rod got one, too, but it was much more expensive.

**GR: Do you keep in touch with Rod?**

PC: Not really. There are so many people who want to work with him, so many bass players who will do it for cheap, and I guess that's his choice.

***"I didn't partake in the groupie thing. It wasn't kosher."***



# ► PAPER TIGER



I first saw Nikki McClure when she went on tour with the Olympia, Washington indie rock band, Kicking Giant, in the early '90s. At a show on the UCLA campus, she sang an a capella tune along to a rhythm that she slapped on herself. A few years later, I was introduced to her in Olympia when I was visiting the KG's leader Tae Won Yu. She made some great fresh berry pie (which we ate with ice cream), but she makes even better art. Her ornate images, carefully cut from paper, grace record sleeves, calendars, books, and gallery installations.

#### **GR: How did you start making art?**

NM: I went to Evergreen to study natural history, birds, insects, and marine biology. I made a book about wetlands and I wanted pictures for it, but I didn't want it to be technical drawings, so I decided to use linoleum. Never having done it before, I talked to an art guy. Ten weeks later, I came back with a full book of carvings. Then people started to ask me to draw pictures of birds and stuff for different things for the city and the state.

#### **GR: What was your style like then?**

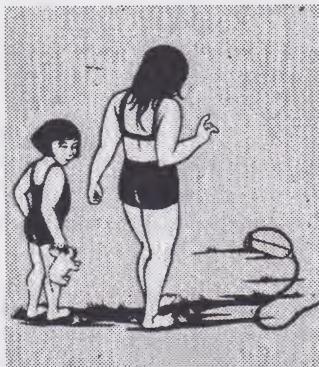
NM: Well, kind of the same, actually, but with linoleum. Then it started to take too much time and I always kept forgetting to reverse things, so I started using scratchboard. I kept getting hung up on details, because I'm a detail person. I was like, "I like black and white, but people are scanning the stuff and it looks crappy..." Tae was like, "Why don't you try using paper?" And I said, "Okay." The first thing I did felt really right.

#### **GR: What did you use to cut?**

NM: Well, I'd been doing fold-and-cut for a long time with scissors, but I was using an X-Acto knife for scratchboard and linoleum, so I used that on the paper.

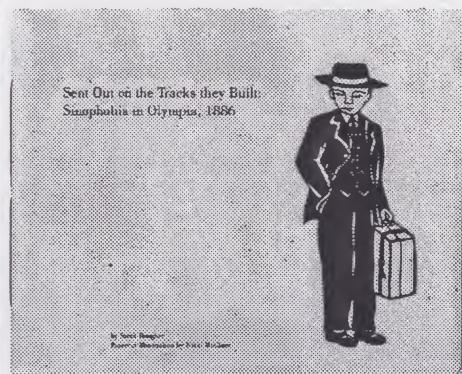
#### **GR: What were some of your early projects?**

NM: I did an apple book, a calendar, and then the Chinese book. Sarah Douger (from the band the Crabs) was doing research about something and came across a story about how Olympia's founding citizens or whatever "saved the Chinese," really trumpeting up the good deed that was done. She looked at it with curiosity, like "This doesn't sound right," because it was about the Establishment. So she did more research on it, and asked me if I wanted to do a book with her. It's been really great because we've been giving it to schools in the area and they've been looking up the history and using it as a teaching tool.



b4 martin wong





## ***"The X-Acto Gripster. It's not the common one. It screws up on the top rather than at the bottom."***

### **GR: Your art is generally for the people.**

NM: When I show my artwork I always try to incorporate something everyone can have. Like if they can't buy the originals, they can buy the book—something kind of cheap that they can take home.

### **GR: You've done some album art, too...**

NM: Right now this week I'm doing the new Thrones cover, which I'm excited about.

### **GR: Is all your work for friends' bands?**

NM: Yeah, but I get commissions from people to do pictures.

### **GR: Do you cut portraits?**

NM: Yeah, but I tell them I'm not a portraitist. There's this thing called Artwalk and for five dollars you get swamped in the scene. I wore this big hoop skirt

dress I got for five dollars. I walked around cutting silhouettes of people and pinned all the mistakes on my dress. There were all these weird faces in black on the white dress.

### **GR: Were people into their portraits or did they complain about the sizes of their noses and stuff?**

NM: No, they were happy with it, but in my first batch everyone looked like George and Martha Washington because I'd never really done it before. By the end of the evening I was really good.

### **GR: Have you ever hurt yourself with the knife?**

NM: No, but one day I'm going to poke my eye out. Sometimes I scratch my head with the X-Acto knife in my hand and realize that the blade is really close.

### **GR: Is there a special blade you always use?**

NM: The X-Acto Gripster. It's not the common one. It screws up on the top rather than at the bottom. When I used the bottom one and did the turns, I would end up undoing the blade and it would fall off.

**GR: Do you have callouses on your hand?**

NM: No, because I put one of those padded things on it. I do have a bit of a Carpal Tunnel thing. It's something I'm learning how to work better.

**GR: Do you have to be careful when you go bowling or whatever so you don't tweak your hand?**

NM: I don't think I'm going to go bowling for a while. There's the wrist, but there's the muscle right below my

elbow that gets it.

**GR: Do you ever carve your fruits or vegetables, Thai style?**

NM: I will make elaborate snowflake things to put powdered sugar on.

**GR: What about music? Do**

***"I really am going to run for mayor. Really."***

**you still sing?**

NM: Not much because I devote so much of my time now making pictures. I don't need to express myself that way. It was just the right form of expression at that moment for me. There was something about the immediacy of it that was important. I would just write a song and go sing it. But once I started playing more and more, going on tour, it kind of lost that spontaneity because I was playing the same songs.

**GR: How many tours did you**

**go on?**

NM: Three. Kicking Giant, Tattletale and Sue Fox, and with Dub Narcotic and Some Velvet Sidewalk.

**GR: You're so closely tied to the Olympia scene. Is there even one part of the town that you're not familiar**

**with?**

NM: I'm going to be mayor one of these days, but I went into a store that I'd never been in yesterday. It was right smack in the middle of downtown!

**GR: Is Olympia kind of like Cheers for you, where everyone knows you?**

NM: Uh huh. I really am going to run for mayor. Really.

**GR: What's your platform?**

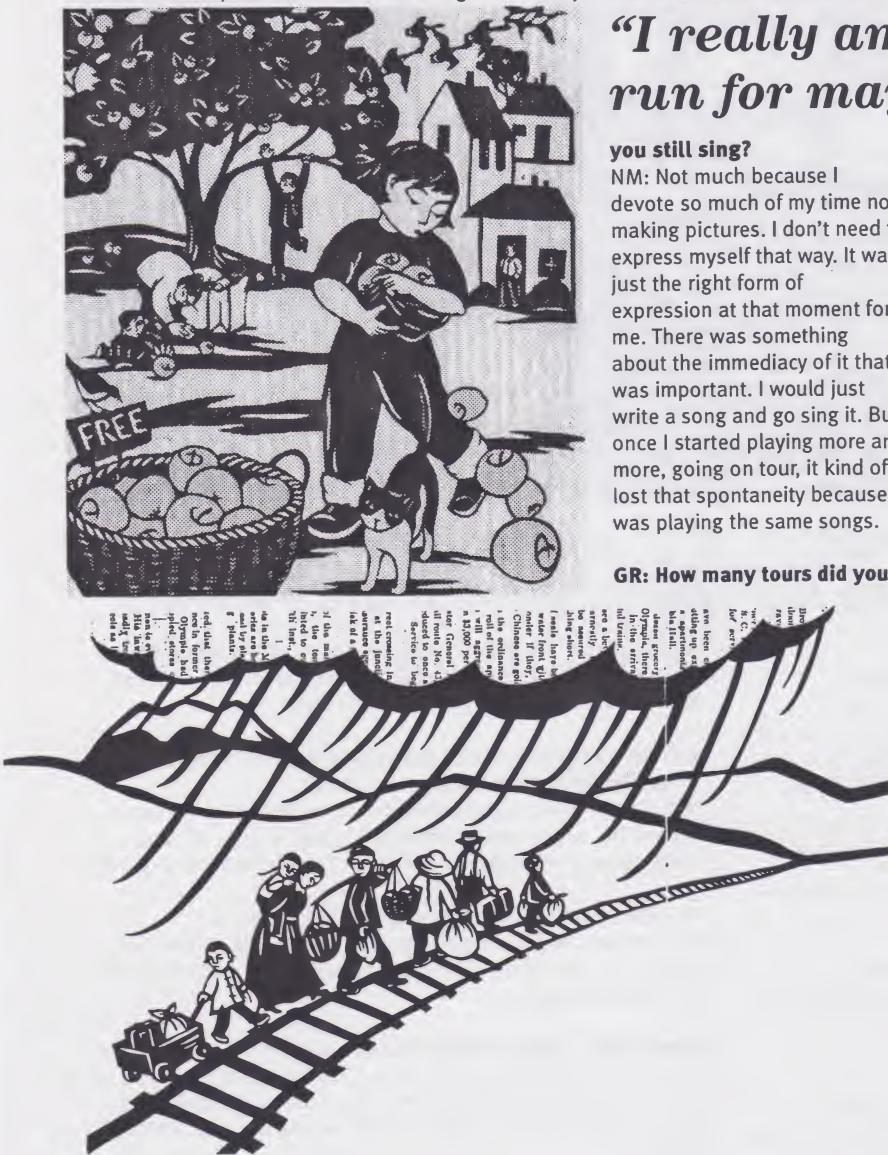
NM: I don't know, just so that Tae has to address me as "mayor." Just "mayor."

**GR: Is Olympia still indie rock heaven?**

NM: It's home. I'm so into the K scene that I forget it's fueling indie rock. The building takes up half a block and upstairs we just have this really great community of people making art and supporting themselves. Then we have the Community Print...

**GR: I understand it was opened up for the holidays.**

NM: Well, we feel so fortunate to have all these tools and a place to use them. We realize we have access to these



things, so we want other people to have access, too. There's an idea that Community Print will become really, truly, totally community in the future, but right now there's a lot of people who use it. You're welcome to come up and use it to make posters, books, cards, labels for the alternative milks—all sorts of things. I've made labels for my applesauce and jams this year. So we have all these tools, and I thought we'd have this open studio. People were doing wood carvings, silk-screening wrapping paper...

**GR: Besides becoming mayor, what other goals do you have?**

NM: I have lots of dreams. I have this little animated movie that I've been trying to find the time to play around with. I made these paper dolls that are hinged.

**GR: Like Indonesian shadow puppets?**

NM: Kind of. It's really amazing to see my characters move and react to the environment and think about what they'd say. I also want to do a giant shadow puppet show at the Capital Theater. I want to do a children's book written by someone else besides me so I don't have to worry about spelling things... I'm also going to Japan next year to do art and perform and stuff.

**GR: When did you realize papercutting was something in demand?**

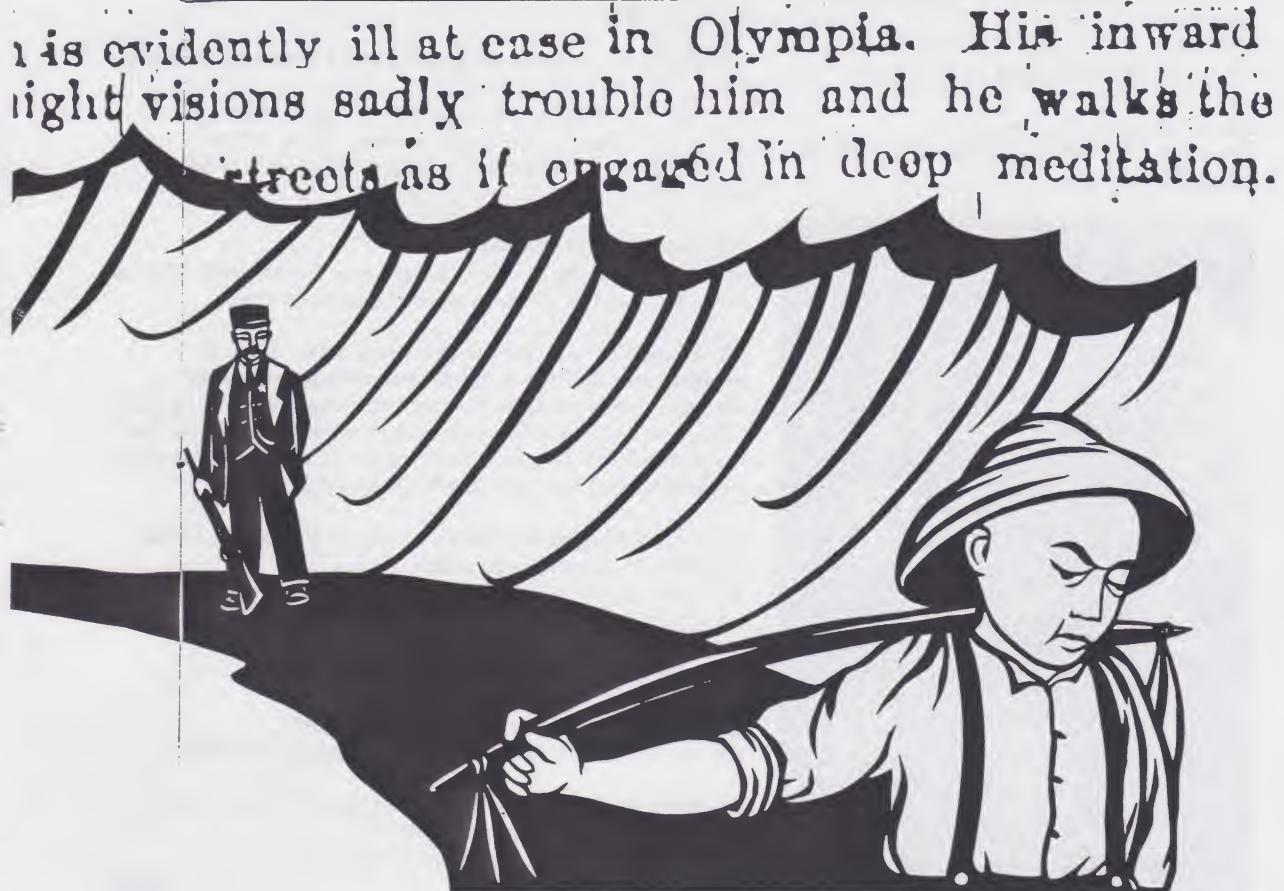
NM: My first art showing, because everything sold out.

**GR: How much did you sell them for?**

NM: Fifty dollars a piece. Now things are about \$400, and they're still selling out. There are shadows, birds fly out of the screen, there's a sculptural element.

**GR: How's your 2000 calendar doing?**

NM: I just sold 500 of the first printing of my calendar and 250





***"I also leave right when I'm at the peak of my work, so I'll be excited to come back to it and not wear myself out."***

---

of the second. I'm really excited because as an artist, you want your work to be seen by as many people as possible. My stuff is going to be in people's houses for a full year!

**GR: There's a certain primal appeal to your art, isn't there?**

NM: They're nice pictures. People's moms like them. And I think they make people happy.

**GR: You don't make sad ones?**

NM: No, but I'm trying to make this gruesome one for the Thrones cover.



**GR: What's the easiest thing for you to cut?**

NM: Pears.

**GR: The hardest?**

NM: A realistic face. Like doing the faces for the Chinese book, those were really hard.

**GR: What's the weirdest thing you've ever been commissioned to do?**

NM: Well, I declined this one project to do a reproduction of Jesus talking to children. But the people wanted pictures of their grandchildren. I decided it was too weird, I didn't want to be responsible for that.

**GR: Do you ever get "cutter's block"?**

NM: Yes. But usually the month before I have to have something due like a book or show, I'll say to myself it's got to get done.

**GR: Do you have a record you listen to, a coffee drink, or anything else that always gets the creative juices going?**

NM: Well, there's sweeping my floor. I make my desk perfectly clean. I also leave right when I'm at the peak of my work, so I'll be excited to come back to it and not wear myself out. Often I'll leave my room a complete mess and come back in the morning.

**GR: I would imagine that bloodshot at 3:00 a.m. would not be a good time to use an X-Acto knife.**

NM: Yeah. Once the sun goes down, I can't cut any more.

**GR: What does your family think about your art?**

NM: They all think I'm famous, but I tell them I'm not.

**GR: You haven't been in *Artforum* or *Juxtapoz*?**

NM: No. No, not that I know of. Maybe an Olympia newspaper.

**GR: We're the first people to interview you? I thought people would be interviewing you left and right.**

NM: No, not yet, but this is the year it will happen.



# ► BYRON LEE MIXTAPE

by Martin Wong

As a pioneer and ambassador of ska, rocksteady, and reggae, Byron Lee has been massively influential in the evolution of music. But his work isn't all good. For example, his early sugar-coated ska and new disco soca aren't for me. I spent a small fortune on albums to scan for the GR17 article, and those songs haven't lasted five minutes on the turntable. But between those periods, Lee put out some rocksteady and early reggae music so soulful and great that it will make your heart burst. I distilled all my vinyl (and a few CDs) onto a 90-minute-tape so my friends wouldn't have to invest as much time and money as I did to enjoy the work of this massively prolific bass player and businessman. If you want to make your own (maybe for someone you are into, because this is make-out music), here are the sources:

## SIDE ONE

"Napoleon Solo" - "Step Ladder" *Rocksteady Explosion* (Dynamic BLP10) This is the first BL&D LP to buy with its relaxed, bottom-heavy grooves and rocksteady dance steps on the back. Smooth, soulful, and cool.

"Your Love Is Amazing" - "Popcorn" *Reggay Roun' The World* (Dynamic DY3335) Half of the songs on this collection are lovely instrumentals, sticky and sweet like molasses. The others are false-toothed soul covers to keep the juices flowing. "Love Grows" - "Freedom Street" *Tighten Up* (Dynamic DY3315) Subtitled "Moods in Reggae," this is a full-on make-out album, roots style. This bared torso cover came out way before Janet Jackson or Madonna.

"Soul Serenade" - "Square from Cuba" *Reggay Eyes* (Jamaica Gold JMC 200.107) As rock-steady was fading, this was the first album to have the word *reggay* in it. (The spelling *reggae* would eventually win out.) On this LP, Lester Sterling of the Skatalites was serving as a Dragonaire. "Under the Mango Tree" *Dr. No* (EMI CDP 7-96210-2) The first James Bond movie featured BL&D in various scenes, and the band also dominates the soundtrack, a cool mix of spy music, jazz, Caribbean, and ska. This album introduced ska to a lot of Americans.

## SIDE TWO

"A&T Party" *Top of the Ladder* (Dynamic BLP-11) It's mostly Calypso and Caribbean music, but this is a good sample of what Lee was playing at the Dragonaires' weekly Jamaica Hilton gigs before getting into ska.

"Fire Fire" - "Midnight Groover" *Reggay Blast Off* (Jamaican Gold JMC 200.108) Cool, soulful reggae with an abundance of funky keyboards. Fans of Money Mark have to check out Winston

Wright's electric organ work on "Who Done It," "Space Fever," and "Midnight Groover."

"Johnny Too Bad" - "Express Yourself" *Reggay Splashdown* (Dynamic Dyna 3322) As usual, there are amazing covers, including Charles Watts' "Express Yourself" (the song sampled by NWA). Ironically, *Reggae Splashdown* came before *Reggae Blast Off*.

"Message to a Black Man" - "A Little Love" *Reggae Hot Shots 1971-1973* (Jamaican Gold JMC 200.122) This is one of the best BL&D compilations out there, stacked high with 18 primo cuts, including Byron Lee's take on the "Theme from Shaft."

If you want the tape but don't want to deal with tracking down and buying all the records, we will hook you up. Send \$5 + \$1 postage to GIANT ROBOT PO Box 642053 LA, CA 90064



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## BYRON LEE & THE DRAGONAIRES

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• BABY BE TRUE  
• HOLD ME TIGHT  
• STEP LADDER  
• YOUR LOVE IS AMAZING  
• BREAKFAST IN BED  
• THREE BELLS  
• BACK STABBERS  
• POPCORN  
• LOVE GROWS  
• ONE FOUND WEIGHT  
• FREEDOM STREET  
• SOUL SERENADE  
• CAN I CHANGE MY MIND  
• MUSICAL SCORCHER  
• BOND IN BLISS  
• SQUARE FROM CUBA  
• UNDER THE MANGO TREE

• A&T PARTY  
• FIRE FIRE  
• WHO DONE IT  
• SPACE FEVER  
• THE LAW  
• SWEET SENSATION  
• LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT  
• MIDNIGHT GROOVER  
• JOHNNY TOO BAD  
• I'LL BE THERE  
• WHAT CAN I TELL HER?  
• EXPRESS YOURSELF  
• MESSAGE TO A BLACK MAN  
• SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES  
• SHAFT  
• FOR YOUR PRECIOUS LOVE  
• A LITTLE LOVE  
•

# ► I AM SAM LEE by daniel wu



Made with a US\$65,000 budget, directed by a first-time director, shot on expired film, and featuring a cast of unknowns, *Made in Hong Kong* had all the makings of a big flop. Who knew the seemingly insignificant film about Hong Kong's disaffected youth would take the prize for Best Film at the 1997 Hong Kong Film Awards? Who knew its lead actor, a 21-year-old electrician and skateboarder would become a star?

I saw *Made in Hong Kong* when it came out during the summer of 1997 because the poster looked cool. It had a ratty-looking kid in yellow sunglasses pointing a gun right in my face. I thought the movie would be about raves. It was really about a Triad debt collector who dressed like Sid Vicious. The lead character, played by Sam Lee, was a very refreshing change from Hong Kong's mass of pop star and teen idol actors.

Not long after seeing *Made in Hong Kong*, I met Sam at a fashion show we were doing together. We would later run into each other at raves and work together on *Young and Dangerous: The Prequel*. Recently we worked on *Gen-X Cops*. Not only is Sam a great actor and a pleasure to work with, he's also a really cool guy.



**GR: How has *Made in Hong Kong* changed your life?**

SL: (In Cantonese) What the fuck? We're doing this in English? You know my English isn't that good!

**GR: (In Cantonese) Oh, sorry. How has *Made in Hong Kong* changed your life?**

SL: Well, it's changed everything and it's changed nothing. In terms of my work, it made it so I don't have to wire shit together anymore. It also gave me a foundation for my acting, my new job. In terms of my personality, I haven't changed at all.

**GR: What was it like being an electrician?**

SL: It was cool, I guess. I was a professional electrician. I worked on the big shit like the new convention center. I used to get shocked every day. I would get to work half-awake and get shocked. That was the best way to wake up.

**GR: Wasn't that dangerous?**

SL: Yeah, but more dangerous was working up in the ceilings at the convention center because it was so fucking high. You could easily fall and slam hard.

**GR: Is it true that they didn't let the workers**

**take piss breaks?**

SL: Yeah, because we were trying to get it done before the Handover. If you had to take a piss, you had to climb down and go real far to the port-o's and it would waste a lot of time. So we would just piss anywhere. The whole place stank of piss!

**GR: What do your mom and dad think of your new career?**

SL: Well, now they are really happy for me, especially after winning the Best Newcomer award. Actually, when I was filming *Made in Hong Kong*, I didn't even tell them 'till we were about half way done. They started to wonder what the fuck I was doing and why I wouldn't come home at night. Finally, I told them and they were like, "You're in a movie? What

was like I was dreaming or something. I couldn't believe it. I walked up to the podium like I was high or something and when I got to the podium I couldn't speak. I never thought I would get it. I was happy because there were people out there who appreciated my work as an actor.

**GR: How many movies have you been in since *Made in***



***"I used to get shocked every day. I would get to work half-awake and get shocked. That was the best way to wake up."***

kind of movie? Is it a porno movie?"  
They really didn't believe it. I guess they are used to the idea now.

**GR: What was it like winning the Best Newcomer award?**

SL: Man, I was so fucking happy. It

**Hong Kong?**

SL: Umm... I think about 11.

**GR: How are they different than *Made in Hong Kong*?**

SL: The others are so fast! Fruit Chan was so serious making *Made in Hong Kong*. He took his time and went over every little detail. The



SL: No time to sleep. No time to hang out with my parents. No time to go to raves.

**GR: How would you describe your acting style?**

SL: Freestyle, man. I like to improvise and make up jokes and stuff. I make it as natural as possible. I try to do each take a little differently to keep it fresh.

**GR: How do your acting style and skateboarding style compare?**

SL: They're pretty much the same. Both require a certain amount of concentration to pull things off. Like when you're skating, you gotta lay it all out first to pull a trick. You have to envision how it's all gonna turn out, timing, approach, etc. When I'm acting, I do the same thing. I think about what I'm gonna do and how the scene is gonna flow and stuff like that. Skating is harder, though, because when you make a mistake you SLAM! At least in acting you can have a second take. Even if you're fighting, you've got pads and it doesn't hurt as much.

***"I eat a fucking lot, I don't know why I'm so skinny. Maybe I have tapeworms or something."***

other movies are dp fast that you don't even have time to think about anything! Like *Young and Dangerous: The Prequel*, remember how fast we worked on that? It was like, what, three weeks total?

**GR: What's the best thing about being an actor?**

SL: Meeting lots of really cool people. Also, as an actor you get to express yourself in so many different ways that you normally couldn't. You can be a punk, a gangster, a cop or whatever. You can experience a lot that way.

**GR: What's the worst thing about being an actor?**

**GR: What are your favorite skate tricks?**

SL: (All in English) Backside tailslide, 360 kickflip, fakietailslide, frontside running kickflip

**GR: It seems like your best English phrases are skate**



**tricks.**

SL: Yeah, I used to watch a lot of videos to learn tricks. Sometimes I would learn from magazines, but videos are much easier to learn from. So I got all the names down.

**GR: Do you eat much? Why are you so skinny?**

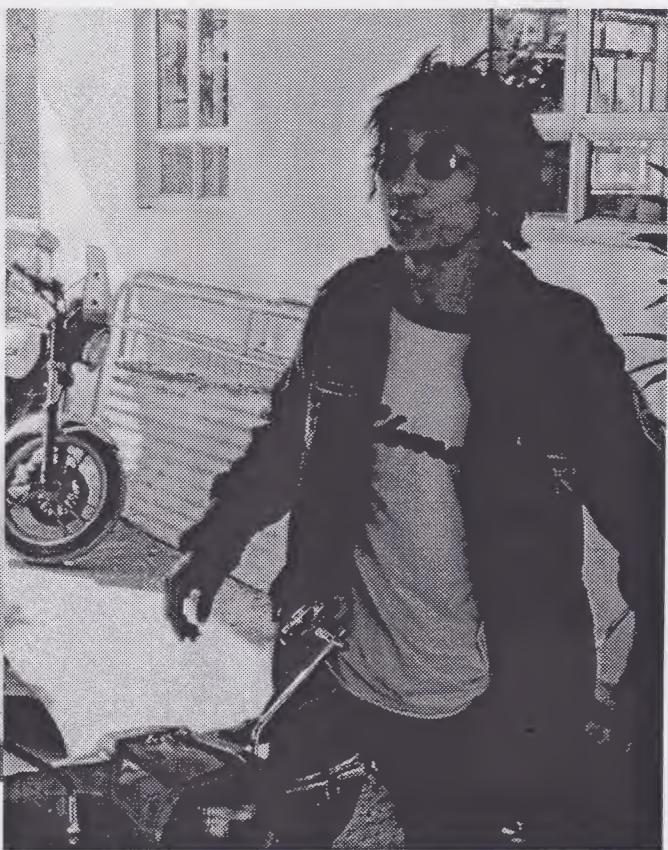
SL: I eat a fucking lot, I don't know why I'm so skinny. Maybe I have tapeworms or something. I was a really fat kid and then, at around 6 or 7, I started to slim out.

**GR: Actually, how much do you weigh?**

SL: 123 pounds before a shit, 120 after.

**GR: Do you like Canto-Pop?**

SL: No way, I hate it!



**GR: But aren't you with Andy Lau's management company?**

SL: Yeah, but that doesn't mean I have to like his music. I like any kind of dance music, trip hop—stuff like that. I love going to raves.

**GR: What do you do when you're not doing showbiz shit?**

SL: I hang out with you! I spend time with my folks, go to raves, skate, relax...

**Sam's Favorites**

**Drinks:** Fresh OJ, Heinekin, Vodka, and Yakult

**Snacks:** Time Out candy bars

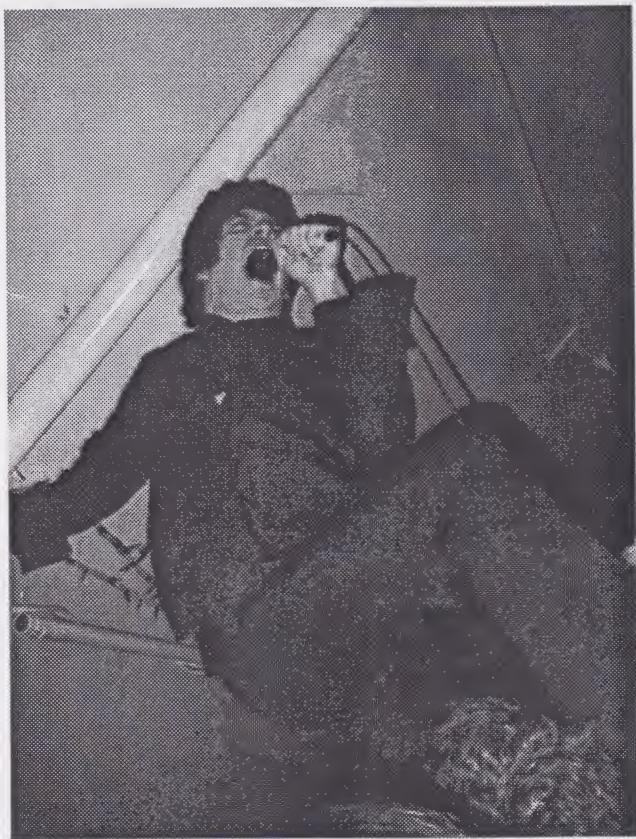
**Clothes:** Secondhand and vintage clothes

**Food:** Chicken fried rice, seafood spaghetti

# ► MAKE UP

by martin wong

## INTERVIEW WITH IAN SVENONIUS



**GR:** After two albums with *Nation of Ulysses* and a single for *Cupid Car Club*, the Make Up has made it to six LPs. What's the secret to Make Up's staying power?

IS: We've been learning our instruments. With the inception of the band, everyone in the group started playing a new instrument. So I think there's been a learning function.

**GR:** The newest songs sound really full with the horns and polish...

IS: Right now we're just trying to make our live show more

Guy groups, disco divas, phony rappers, weasely scratchers, and snotty punks—so much of today's music is generic and boring. But once in a while, a band erupts from the underground that sounds like no other. Make Up is one of those bands. Rising from the ashes of *Nation of Ulysses* and *Cupid Car Club*, the Washington, D.C.-based band combines the attitude of punk, energy of hardcore, and format of gospel into an all-powerful blend. Gone are the borders between band and audience, style and substance, politics and performance, and punk and funk. All are one when the Make Up's on stage, and Ian Svenonius is the one in the spotlight.

musical. Like on our last two tours we brought an extra person who played on the songs that needed overdubs. It's changed the performance a lot. More composed, more musical. That's really nice because it's a change. Especially when our act has been touring constantly for several years.

**GR:** Has this growth affected the way you write your songs?

IS: I think so. We've always been very self-conscious. In Make Up, it's always been very

programmatic the way the songwriting occurred because we knew what we wanted to try to achieve. So our records began as live documents which were always kind of a document for behavior. And we've always tried to fuse these elements that we were very self-conscious about trying to incorporate—like this inversion of the consumer-producer paradigm, the inclusion of the audience. So it's always been very self-conscious for us to have very stripped-down musicality, central vocals, emphasis on the vocals that should be repetitive, chanty, semi-retarded...

**GR: It's made for an audience, made to be played live.**

IS: Exactly. We asked ourselves, "What is music

create. It's fun to be entitled to create. I think that's the beauty of underground music because we're all entitled to create. It's not some kind of caste system like in some countries in Africa where only certain families make music. We're all entitled to create and we're very thankful that people care about what we do.

**GR: What is it that you are communicating?**

IS: People always think that we're this political group, but in fact we're not in the sense of Bob Geldof or Rock the Vote or anything. We're not really a political group. We don't really believe in the political process so much. We're very aware of our historical context. But I think we're not trying to incite voters to do a particular thing because we're actually quite cynical about the political process. So I guess what we're trying to intonate is that we can create a space for people



for? What is live music for?" Live music is to communicate through a public address system over amplified music. So what form should lyrics take? Should they be literary or super-clever? No, they should be pretty simple and moronic. No, not moronic. Very chant-oriented.

**GR: So you'd never be a band that plays in studios but never tours?**

IS: Well, we love the studio and we love to

**"The country began as an oligarchy so there was the freedom to rape slaves."**

who feel like they're not really included in the cultural dialogue.

**GR: So it's liberating, but people are free to do whatever they want instead of you telling them what do to?**

IS: Yeah, perhaps. Although I think that freedom is a little bit overrated. There's this whole idea of "freedom" in America, this kind of nebulous word that changes meaning according to the whims of the power structure. For example, the country began as an oligarchy so there was the freedom to rape slaves. Maybe that's too vulgar, but this is true. This is what the country was built on. And at the time everyone was talking about freedom and it became freedom to make lots of money, freedom to invade Mexico, or whatever. Anyway, Sun Ra once said, "The children of America are raised on the idea of freedom when they should really think about discipline," and I think that's an interesting quote.

**GR: Make Up's learning new instruments would**

**go with Sun Ra's suggestion.**

IS: Yeah. Well, he was a real discipline freak. He lived in a communal situation with his musicians. They lived and breathed as one. He was almost like a Spartan. You know what I mean? His music was a weapon.

**GR: So, is the Nation of Ulysses' 13-point plan to destroy America still in effect?**

IS: Well, to destroy America, I wouldn't consider that a political thing. Everyone in America is taught to think in a very binary way. Like oftentimes an interviewer will call and say, "Who

to be this schism between electronic music and rock and roll and how they're supposed to be completely apart, and diametrically opposed, and which side are you on, et cetera et cetera. I think a big part of it is the industry is trying to shut down rock and roll because essentially the Chemical Brothers and electronic programming is so much more profitable. But people keep telling me how rock and roll is dead and how it no longer sells, but if I go to a show... If I went back to a show in the glory days, you know, if it was Hüsker Dü, which was a group that was around when rock ruled the land supposedly, and then if I go to a show now, like Pavement, there's a lot more people at the Pavement show. All I've got to say is that sure there's a lot of select



do you like, The Stooges or Led Zeppelin? The Beatles or the Stones? Are you political or apolitical?" There's this binary way of thinking, but to me everything is unified. And when people say "politics," to me it's legislators and lawyers making laws and trade agreements to make money for their friends. That's politics to me. That's what I mean when I say we're not a political band. A plan to destroy America, that's a whole different thing. It's subverting or promoting another ideology, another reality. Exposing the thing. Puncturing the boil.

**GR: Do you get the dialectic-type questions over and over?**

IS: I was thinking in particular of a recent interview I did. I think part of it is the so-called "electronica revolution" and how there's supposed

**"The Make Up, we've always treaded upon our own lonely path."**

interest in electronic music, but I don't think that's any different than the dance clubs that were playing Depeche Mode in the '80s. It's a very analogous situation to something that was happening 10 or 12 years ago. I think this idea that everything has shifted is more marketing. It's money-based.

**GR: And where does Make Up fit into the equation?**

IS: Well, the Make Up, we've always treaded upon our own lonely path.

**GR: Is it that lonely? You must have made a lot of friends with so much touring.**

IS: No. We're kind of celebrating the gospel form in the sense that we steal these aspects of the music. We obviously don't sound anything like traditional gospel, but one of the things we celebrate is the idea that gospel music

exists on its own, with its own star system, not inside of the pop marketplace.

**GR: What was it like being dubbed the "World's Sassiest Boy" by Sassy magazine?**

IS: You know, it was in the spirit of Joan of Arc. I was the chosen one, the anointed. I had to do my thing. But I think for the readers of Sassy magazine, I don't know if they were that pleased. I don't know. Who knows? It's like anything.

**GR: Did you go to church a lot when you were young?**

IS: No. I grew up down the street from a lot of really loud churches, but I audited all different religions when I was a child. Kind of like they were a buffet or smorgasbord. When I was five I was into Hinduism and then I had a little bout with Allah.

**GR: Now you're making your own gospel?**

IS: No, I just believe in spiritualism, music, and the place that the rich, congregational ritual serves for people who are outside of the official form of expression.

**GR: Where did your punk rockness come from?**

IS: I definitely grew up within DC hardcore. I saw Minor Threat when I was a wee one.

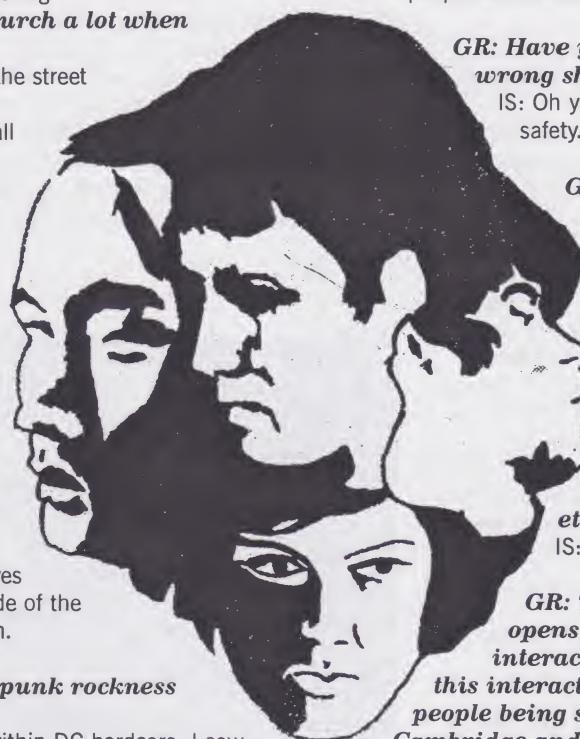
**GR: Is that where your energy comes from when you go on stage?**

IS: I find music really exciting. It's really sad for me because I hear all these things like, "The singer's on crack." It's really sad to me that people feel any type of performance or theatrical expression that's very animated has to be based on drugs. Know what I mean? Not to be moralistic or proselytizing about drugs, but it's as if people don't feel they can be excited about anything unless there's a substance involved. It's weird. Drums have always been used in military situations. The drums, the blood, and the

heart. Who could resist it?

**GR: I've seen you walk on top of crowds at more than a few shows. What do you look for in a shoulder to leverage yourself on?**

IS: Maybe people who look like they have strong shoulders and are wearing just a t-shirt. When someone's wearing really nice clothes, you don't really want to.... And also, my clothes on tour sometimes smell really horrible. I look for people who wouldn't be too offended by them.



**GR: Have you ever stepped on the wrong shoulder?**

IS: Oh yeah, yeah. Then you pray for safety.

**GR: But it's like sitting in the splash zone at Sea World. You know Shamu's going to get you wet.**

IS: Yeah! If it looks appropriate to step on people, then it's appropriate. But it's not part of the program necessarily.

**GR: Well, there's also how low the ceilings are, etc.**

IS: Exactly.

**GR: The gospel style really opens up the dialogue and interaction with the crowd. Has this interaction ever resulted in people being stupid? We saw you in Cambridge and there was this wrestler guy who was heckling you...**

IS: Yeah, there was that... I don't know. I think we can only be flattered by that kind of behavior. If people feel this incredible resentment toward you, then you know you're doing something right.

**GR: Do you see yourself still playing really intimate clubs two years from now.**

IS: Yeah, I don't like big clubs. I really don't like playing for more than a thousand people. It's really kind of exploitative to the audience. Enormously successful performers never played in big halls until The Beatles in Shea Stadium, and that was a very crass, commercial move. It was all about maximizing profit in as short a time as possible. It's not

really respectful to the audience. You know, if you look at Sammy Davis, Jr., he always played little tiny supper clubs. And he'd always book a whole week. We can't do that, but we can definitely make sure the club is more intimate.

**GR: In these clubs, do you see the same people every time you return or are there new faces?**

IS: It's always changing. It's definitely not the chosen few.

**GR: The Make Up has a really cool look. Where does it come from?**

IS: Well, we're performers. We don't believe in art. We're in the music industry and it's an industry.

**GR: You work your asses off.**

IS: Well, we definitely have our share of slothful times, but the white collar world is always going into cappuccino meetings and scratching asses. There's sloth all around. You hear resentful people bitching about the union and how they're all dead wood, but there's plenty of slothfulness to go around.

**GR: What do you do when you're not making music? During your sloth time?**

IS: I can be pretty slothful. I don't know. I have a job, actually.

**GR: Can I ask what you do, or is that too weird?**

**"We definitely have our share of slothful times, but the white collar world is always going into cappuccino meetings and scratching asses."**

IS: It's a little bit demystifying, but that's all right. I don't care. Right now I'm doing research, looking at old stock footage taken by the signal corps for a documentary. Mostly army footage, actually.

**GR: So you're checking out history that most people don't get to see.**

IS: Exactly. Unedited history. Well, it's kind of edited since someone had to film it. Yeah, it's great and it's mostly on 35 mm film.

**GR: What do you think when you see Make Up on film?**

IS: I should really watch more of it...

**GR: I just got that Songs for Cassavetes videotape.**

IS: Oh, that's horrible. That was a really terrible show. Just our performance in it was really horrible. That actually made me want to stop performing, but that was a really long time ago. The songs are basically like these really formal songs. He took some without any lyrics. I was really disappointed with the song choices. That's all right. We have to make our own movie to present ourselves the way we prefer to be presented.



# ► RAMEN

by ERIC NAKAMURA

## the miracle food for broke people



At any Asian superstore, you'll come across an aisle filled with ramen. Much like how a gringo supermarket would have a huge canned soup section, this section is filled with dry packs of noodles from every nation in Asia.

Stocking up for the GR17 ramen review grid, our shopping cart was filled with just about one of everything, including some packs we couldn't read. The total? It was just over \$10. A bargain. The checker giggled when we came up to pay, thinking we were a bunch of idiots with a X note.

But this aisle that is taken for granted is an aisle of hope. The labor of hundreds in huge sweatshop factories make a food product so cheap that even a broke

motherfucker can eat—provided the person scrounges up a microwave oven and a bowl.

Making ramen as a child was my first experience in the kitchen. I'm not counting PB&J sandwiches; I'm talking about using utensils and equipment. After a few minutes of boiling water, carefully putting in the noodles and the oriental flavoring pack, then adding the fishcake, egg, and green onions or whatever was left in the fridge, it was an accomplishment to have made an entire meal all by myself. That was nearly 20 years ago when my boiler was indestructible and eating cheap ramen tasted good everyday.

Today, a pack of ramen can kill me. It was meant to be a clever little taste test, but it became a lot of pain. Although I was eating small amounts of each, mixing flavors was a big mistake. From kimchee to chicken to some shitty pad thai (we thought it was ramen from the picture on the pack) to pho, my gut was filled with MSG. Yes, almost every flavor pack lists MSG as its first or second ingredient. It's not supposed to be *that* bad for you, but it makes me sick.

The taste test for me went bad; my body fell apart after day one. I gave up, tapped out, and had to pass the noodles to Nelson and Martin. For our newest taster, Lisa, ramen was a treat. She gladly ripped open just about every pack left in the office (there was about 50 total) and downed it all without feeling ill. I think her first response to the two shopping bags filled with the colorful packets was, "Cool, let's eat!" Her stomach is stronger than the Pittsburgh Steelers' Iron Curtain during the '70s.

And there you have it, tons of ramen packs tested for taste. Oh yeah. The best overall? Sapporo Ichiban. For a lot of us, and perhaps even you, it's the first pack you ever ate, and in the case of cheap ramen, it's still the best.



# ► THE RAMEN GIRL

Back in the day, we held a "take a picture of Giant Robot magazine" contest. The strongest and craziest photo depicted a woman sitting naked in a tub full of ramen wearing a red cowboy hat and aiming a gun. On the edge of the tub was Giant Robot 9. She won big. Since then, people have asked for her photo and her information. We had no clue. Until now...

b4 eric nakamura

**GR: What kind of ramen did you use?**

RG: Top Ramen Oriental Flavor. I think it was 36 or 40 packs. I tried to boil it at first and all the noodles sank, it would have been lame to be sitting on top of noodles. So I filled the tub with hot water and I held the noodles right on the water and then let it soak until it fell apart. I didn't use the soup base: that would have been gross. A month or two later, other people had also taken picture of themselves in ramen. Apparently, they had a zine, and they thought it would be funny to take a bath in ramen. Then they found out that I had already sat in ramen so they couldn't put it in their zine.

**GR: Did you have noodles hanging off of you when you got out of the tub?**

RG: Yes, and there was this gross starchy coating that didn't come off well. I was at my friend's house and I had to clean up the tub because other people lived there, but I couldn't take a shower for two or three hours later. It was gross to get rid of the ramen because of the starch mess. The coating felt like I was sitting in ramen.

**GR: Have you sat in ramen before?**

RG: Yes, the first time it didn't work.



**"I tried to boil it at first and all the noodles sank, it would have been lame to be sitting on top of noodles."**

The lighting was bad and it was super dark and you couldn't see. My friend kept cutting off my head. She wasn't framing the picture well.

**GR: What gave you that idea?**

RG: I talked to my brother about the contest, and I thought it would be funny to sit in ramen. I could be cooking ramen in a wok while sitting in ramen, and then I thought it was lame. It was pretty grody. I'll try udon next time. I was happy with what came out of it.

**GR: Have many people recognized you?**

RG: Mostly my friends, and that was months later. People would say, "I was sitting on the can and looking at a magazine and saw you." No one stops me on the street, or whatever.

**GR: Is that because of the hat?**

RG: Yeah, the incognito hat. I dunno why.

**GR: Inquiries come from people who want a copy of the picture.**

RG: I had no idea. I don't know whether to be flattered or creeped out. I guess it's to be expected.

**GR: If we sent photos to your fans would that have been bad?**

RG: Yeah, probably. But it would have been interesting.



anything. My brother got an internship with GR.

**Did you think you were going to win?**

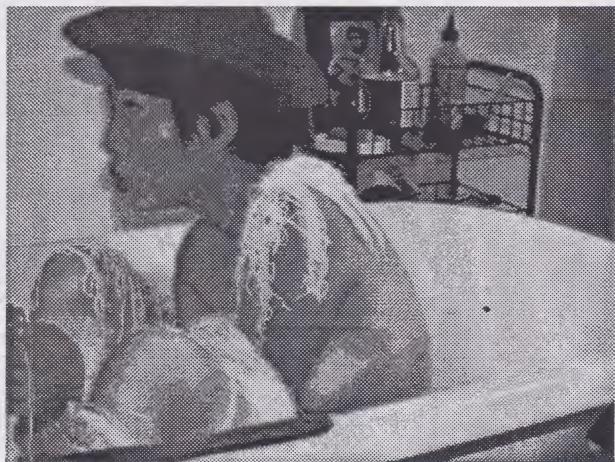
RG: I had no idea. It was fun anyway, but it was nice to win the contest.

**GR: What did you do with your prizes?**

RG: The skateboard is sitting by my hamper. The shoes are in my closet. They are so puffy, but they are nice.

**GR: Did your friends think you were stupid?**

RG: They thought it was neat. They were happy when I won. This Taiwanese guy made fun of me. He was whispering to his friends that I am the ramen girl.



**GR: Did you know you were billed as "the ramen girl"?**

RG: Yes. I think you told me when you met me. You said, "Hey, it's the ramen girl."

**GR: What did you think about your photos?**

RG: I thought they were good. Because I used some crazy film that made me yellow and the hat red. That's why it's good for me personally. At my old apartment it was taped to the wall. Now it's on my record player.

**GR: Has anything good come out of it?**

RG: I was hoping for free ramen for the rest of my life or being on the Top Ramen bag, but nothing happened. I haven't gotten more dates or

**GR: If someone approached you, said that you were the ramen girl, and asked you on a date, would you go?**

RG: I think there would be more factors than that. Who doesn't like ramen? People in college are poor and like ramen. Think of all the starving people who could have eaten ramen in the photo.

**GR: Did your parents see it?**

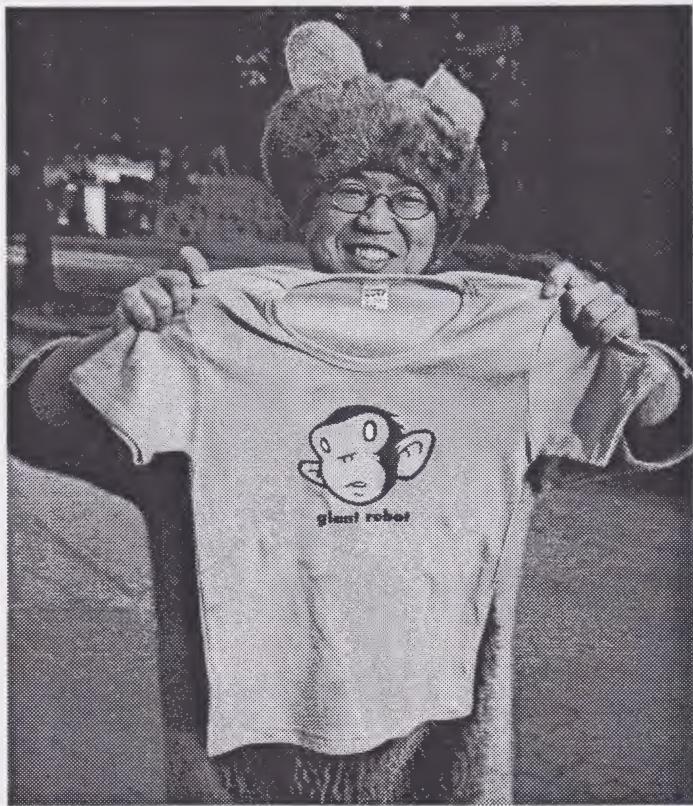
RG: No, but my mom saw the picture later, and asked, "What was that all about?" I said, "I did that photo for fun."



# ► BEAR WITNESS

THE EXCLUSIVE interview in which BILL BEAR ANSWERS  
THE QUESTIONS YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD ABOUT BEARDOOM.

by martin wong



***"The female panda is only in heat two or three days during the year. That really sucks."***

**GR: Do you ever shit in the woods? What do you wipe with?**

BB: All the time. If I don't have toilet paper, a cold river to dunk my ass in will do. But dingleberries, they still happen. We can't cut each other's ass hair like you people do.

**GR: Is it true that female campers on their periods have to watch out for bears who can smell the blood?**

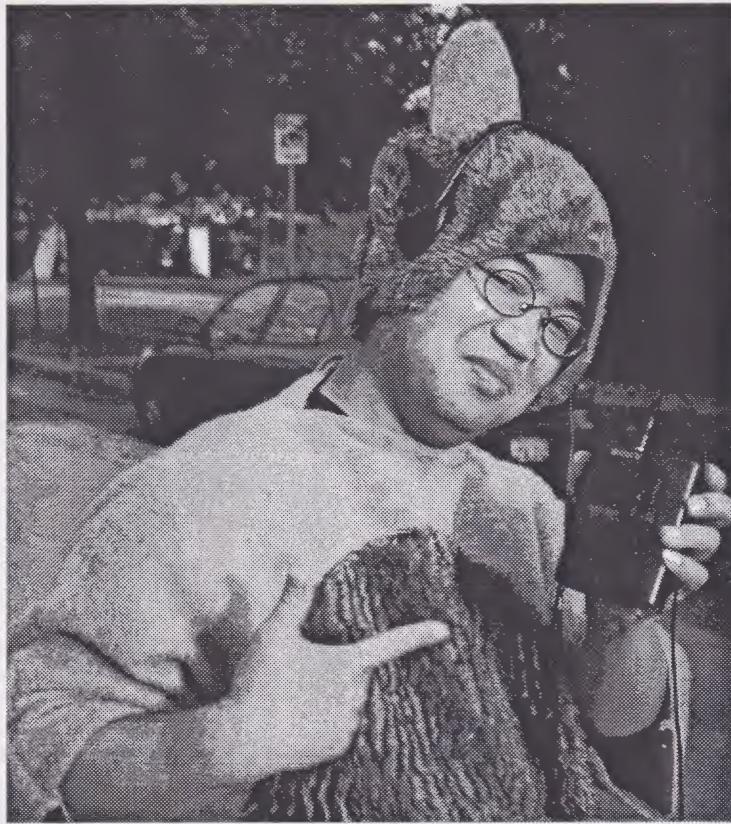
BB: The smell of female is strangely attractive.

**GR: What do you think of the polar bears who drink Coke on TV commercials?**

BB: They are sell-outs to The Man. I hear some pandas are cashing in now, too.

**GR: Why do pandas have such difficulties getting it on? Zoos have tried everything short of Viagra and pornos to get them in action.**

BB: Have you ever tried making it in public? To make matters worse, the female panda is only in heat two or three days during the year. That really sucks.



**GR: Favorite When-Animals-Attack moment.**

BB: It's great when bears get off on dumb picnickers, but I also like it when city workers take down pit bulls. Those dogs are unnecessarily mean.

**GR: Yogi or Boo Boo and why?**

BB: Boo Boo was probably smarter, but Yogi was a real bear. The ranger was all over his peanut butter and jelly encrusted jock.

**GR: Is Winnie the Pooh really Zen or just stupid?**

BB: Winnie is harmless, but the people who buy into his Zen marketing are highly susceptible to cults.

**GR: Was Gentle Ben an Uncle Tom?**

BB: He was a Tom, but you have to understand that roles were hard to get then. At least a gorilla didn't get the role.

**GR: Were you bummed that BJ named his orangutan "bear"?**

BB: The orang sucked, Greg Evigan sucked, and the whole show sucked. But the idea of a show about a trucker is kinda cool. It went well with the Dukes of Hazzard.

**GR: Are you familiar with the Descendents song, "I Want to Be a**

**Bear"?**

BB: It's about shitting in the woods and smelling muff, so I am very familiar.

**GR: Do you have a woody when you wake up from hibernation?**

BB: Yes, I sometimes shut off my alarm clock with it.

**GR: Have you ever gotten stuck on top of a telephone pole?**

BB: That kind of thing only happens on TV and is bad for our image. Those bears should be shot and stuffed.

**GR: Do you eat bear claws at donut shops?**

BB: That is a sick, sick question to ask me.

# ► FAHN WHAHT WOMIN

More than 15 years ago, the lines at Club Lingerie stretched around the block on a regular basis, drawn by headliners such as the yam-packing performance artist Joanna Went. Once I was patient enough to wait outside the box office for a one-night-only appearance by Rudy Ray Moore back in '84 or '85. And based on recent, scrupulously researched parodies of his films on MadTV, the feature-length profile in GR17, and a Web site that offers more than enough to satisfy the neophyte or old school Rudy fan, it's clear the father of pimp fu is now poised to be the next comeback kid.

Just as prudent Joanna fans understand that her shows are best enjoyed from a distance, I chose a seat well back from the stage to take in Rudy that night . . . as I would have for any artist who leans toward audience interaction. Safely seated, I enjoyed Rudy's

opening act, another party-tape kinda guy.

And while white poly-suited Rudy confined his routine to the spoken word, his lyrical delivery was musical. The crowd sat alternately transfixed or mouthing in unison as Dolemite worked his way around the tongue-twisting, crowd-pleasing, already-classic rhymes from *The Human Tornado* and *Petey Wheatstraw*. Seasoned performer that he was, Rudy knew when it was time to work the room. And when I saw him



***"I couldn't move until he'd already put his arm around me, raised me up from my seat, and propped me up."***



64 SHAWN SITES



headed into the aisle and up the stairs toward me, I froze under Rudy's pimp-fu spell. I couldn't move until he'd already put his arm around me, raised me up from my seat, and propped me up in the ants-under-the-magnifying glass spotlight with all eyes in the audience on us.

The rest is pretty vague. I remember that Rudy proclaimed me a "fahn whaft womin" and invited me to join him at home later that night. The incident was mercifully short, and Rudy returned to the stage to continue ranting and wailing well before my knees began to buckle.

After the show, Rudy didn't retire to his dressing room. Ever the performer for the people (or pimpmaster of self-promotion), he and his mother set up a card table on the sidewalk just outside the door to the club to sell LPs, audiotapes, and VHS dubs of his films to adoring fans. Already of dubious quality in their original 16 mm prints, the \$6, sixth-generation VHS dubs had a certain charm in their home-madeness, from the hand-crayoned highlights on the xeroxed label (a different color for every letter in "T-H-E H-U-M-A-N T-O-R-N-A-D-O!") to the surprise "bonus tracks" after the film ended. Patient filmwatchers needed only to wait a bit beyond the closing credits to see the end of whatever Ma Moore had previously recorded before using the tape as dub stock, be it "Wheel of Fortune" or "Fantasy Island."

I only wish I'd bought the entire lot.

For now, I'll have to be content to scan the listings in the Weekly to see which visionary club booker brings Rudy Ray back first. You can bet I'll wait in line for an aisle seat, keeping my eyes fixed on the nerve-shattering, brain-battering, mind-splattering one-man disaster until he decides it's time to work the audience again.



After reading Dolemite's article in GR17, check out [www.shockingimages.com](http://www.shockingimages.com) for a plethora of Rudy Ray Moore info, including his discography, a lengthy "Story of Dolemite" rhyme, an alphabetized ebonics primer, merchandise, and, for those patient enough to scroll all the way down, a Shockwave-powered trailer for the first Dolemite film.



# ► MIYAZAKI

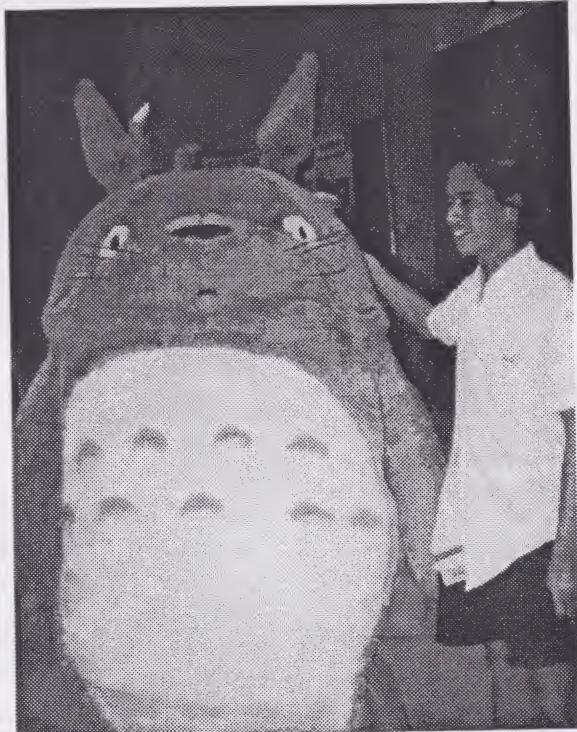
## TOTORO, MONONOKE, AND ME

Miyazaki, Hayao is the man. The interview was conducted at a hotel in Beverly Hills, so I parked on the street to avoid the \$20 hotel parking fee it cost us when we interviewed Chow Yun-Fat in Century City. After a day of being interviewed, the last thing Miyazaki probably wanted was to be interviewed by someone who didn't bother to wear a tie or even dress nice. But, oh well, hopefully my knowledge of anime helped a lot. Miyazaki was actually in good spirits, smoking his cigarettes, but his translator was tired and worn down. Her make-up was barely holding her together. She did a fine job, but the tone of her voice sucked. Imagine trying to get answers from a master of animation, and then having them spewed out to you by a Disneyland tour guide.

Miyazaki, in case you don't know, made the epic *Princess Mononoke*, released in the U.S. with the voices of your favorite stars like Clare Danes, Scully, and Billy "Hick" Bob Thornton. But even more popular is his made-for-kids anime, *Totoro*. If you're in any Asian-concentrated area, take a peek into the cars. You'll see *Totoro* tissue boxes, furry stuffed animals on dashboards, and their likenesses on car sun visors. The wood spirit is popular, but the goods are really expensive. If you want anything like a stuffed animal, expect to pay an extra hefty sum. (Miyazaki had no answers on why, by the way.) He also had a recent video release of *Kiki's Delivery Service* for Disney that probably beat some ass at the sales counter, but for the most part went down quick. Other near-misses for Miyazaki were *Porco Rosso*, *Laputa* (try saying this to someone who knows Spanish), and *Nausicaa*. These and his other efforts are actually quite nice, but just haven't made it here yet. So get your hands on a subtitled copy or wait for them to come out later. *Nausicaa* is released in graphic novel format by Viz company in SF. And you can find hardbound children's books of many of his titles in English as well.

If you're really serious about Miyazaki, there's a store in the Umeda station area in Osaka. Umeda station is one of the main ones in the center of the city so it's tough to miss if you go there. In the mall that surrounds the station sits a shop that looks like a tree fort or something. Filled with greenery and wood shelves, with an overall look that appears in *Princess Mononoke* or *Totoro*, you can find just about anything related to Miyazaki's work. Stuffed animals galore in every size and price, keychains, stationary, household goods, and tons more fill this small store. Just stepping in and looking around is an experience that's tough to beat. And the biggest burn? Miyazaki said that he has no knowledge of the store, never been there, nor hasn't even heard of it!

64 EN



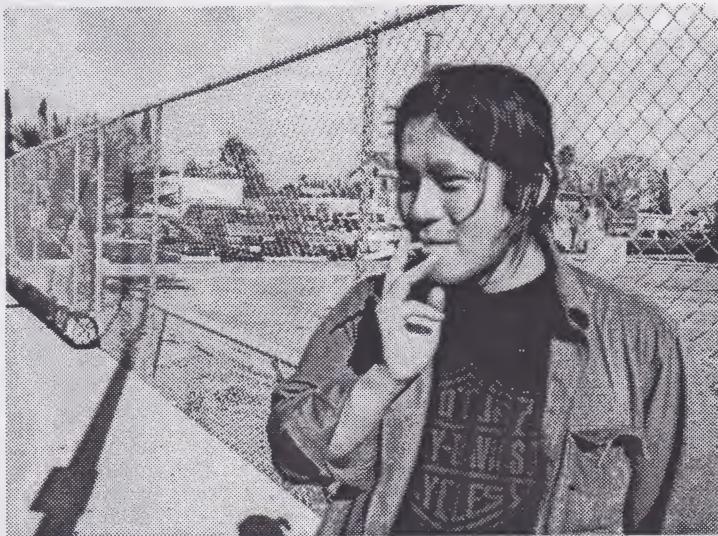
# ► KENTO



## THE MAN BEHIND iQU ROADIES FOR TAKEMURA

Kento had the job of taking DJ Takemura and his singer Aki Tsuyuko around the block. I think I forgot to mention somewhere that the two Japanese musicians are a couple. In person they hardly show it, but that's how it is. Do you care? Probably not, but do check out her solo album released under Takemura's label Childisc. I imagined it would be her singing, and who wouldn't want to hear that? Instead, it's piano or keyboard playing. It's really nice and simple. Worth checking out, for sure. Childisc discs are being distributed by Thrill Jockey in America. You might have to call them up to order them, but the CDs will be up on their Web site for ordering in no time. (Make sure you ask about some of the other music; I hear some is really way out there...) Hit [www.thrilljockey.com](http://www.thrilljockey.com), or if you want to go direct, write to Childisc at 5A, Wings90, 74-4 Jyurakumawari, Nishimachi, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604-8402.

Kento Oiwa is in iQU, a band that's blowing up. If you haven't checked them out, do it when they come to your town. KO is the noggin behind the band, a loco scientist who sometimes wears a lab coat. Or is that a meat cutter's outfit? Either way, the music is cool and crazy, with no vocals needed. Also in the group is Michiko, the keyboardist, and a new stand-up bass player. A young-looking brother, KO's a guitar player, DJ, and a Theremin handler—sometimes all in one song! I've heard a lot of people describe what Kento does with his hand and the antennae, as something like, "Yeah, and he plays this high-pitched



## KENTO TAKES A SMOKE BREAK

sound thing with his hand waving around." It's a theremin. T-h-e-r-e-m-i-n. Invented by some Russkie, there's a film about it. Ask your local cool video store about it and impress your friends by doing it.

Anyway, KO, a great musician who has also played drums for Kicking Giant, was a roadie, a translator, and a driver for Takemura! Imagine having a rockstar pick up after another rockstar. I'd never seen anything like it, and there it was. Egos were left at the door, or in Kento's case in Olympia, since he recently moved to Seattle. But like the quote from D. Boon via Aaron Cometbus, "Sometimes it's just better to be along for the ride."



## ► CHO and CHEN

**Margaret Cho.** She's been a contributor for GR for a couple of years. For a while, people would bring that up all the time, as if we pulled off some magic. And maybe we did, but why the fuss? I have no clue, but for some reason, it was amazing to them that an indie mag like us would have a superstar contributor like her. But you have to know that Margaret's a person who checks out tons of printed material whether it's glossy or not. So having her write and do some work with us at GR is almost predictable. She even popped up at tiny GR events and parties we held.

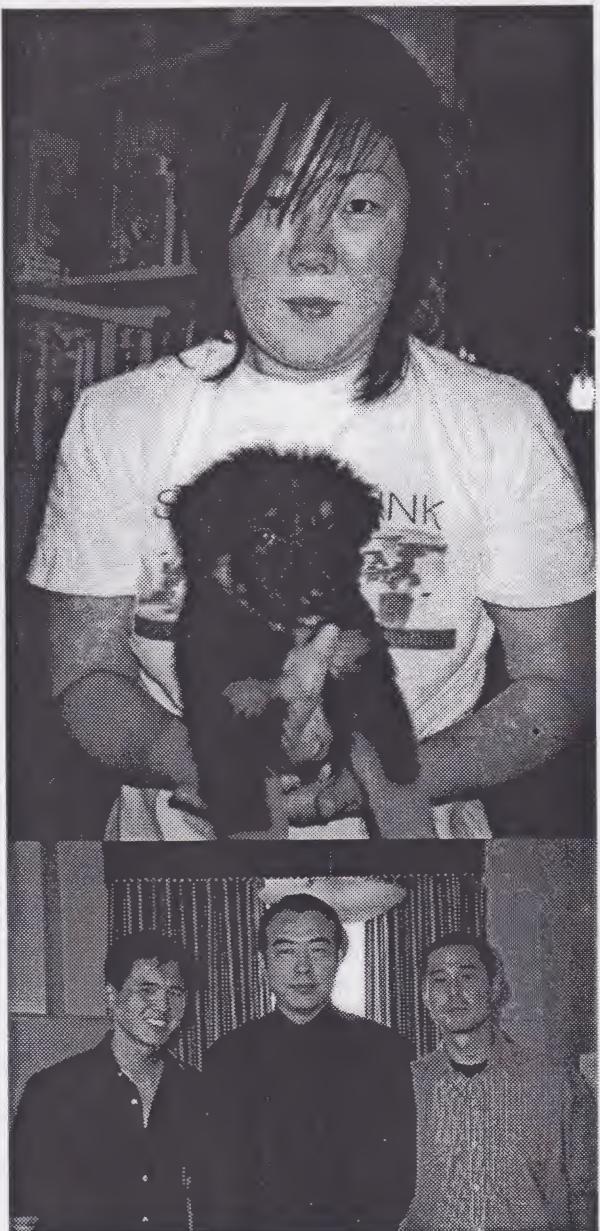
Then she disappeared. Usually, her call backs or e-mail backs were immediate, but from late 1997 through some of 1999, I got no response to anything. Finally, I got a response that said something like, "Dude, I almost died."

From being a writer and a subject to now kicking it on the cover, Margaret's been a GR supporter, friend, and colleague for a while. She's been cool before, during, and after her motherfucking show. I've even seen her perform after a bunch of drinks and she was still cool. She might say something like, "I'm so drunk I have to go home."

Taking her tour of the John Woo *Face/Off* set is still one of the greatest experiences ever. Who knew that Hollywood sets with the tons of people on a siesta picking their asses waiting to lift a cable, or getting union backing to fold a chair or whatever, could be so tight and organized? The high food quality was still the greatest story—even if Margaret didn't eat it.

If you get a chance, order her CD, *Drunk with Power!* It's seriously worth checking out. Funny and entertaining, you'll shit an egg roll. It's still available. Try [cdnow.com](http://cdnow.com)

**Chen Kaige.** We left our interview with the director of *Farewell My Concubine* feeling like a million bucks because he was one of the most honest, interesting, creative, and cool people we'd ever met. Then we're



reduced to poverty level when no one had any clue who he was. It doesn't help when his epic and awesome movie, *Emperor and the Assassin*, comes out and gets a microscopic two-inch ad in the *Los Angeles Times*. Now you know why hombre's not on the cover of GR17.

# ► BORACHA

## DRUNK GIRL AND UNCLE TOM

A drunk gringa came up to Martin and me at a show in Boston. She had the Oh-the-Japanese-are-so-cool fetish bad (to which I usually answer, "Yes, we are," just to be an ass). She walked up and started speaking Japanese! Okay, it's not that bad, since stupid shit happens all the time, and for all we knew, we could have looked like Hideo and Akira straight outta Sapporo, Hokkaido. Big-eyed, jet-lagged, and looking confused at our punk rock experience in Boston made us into fetish prey. But after she went through a couple lines, I recognized them: she was reciting Pizzicato Five lyrics of which she had no understanding! Maybe she thought we were so fresh from the sea that we would think it was funny or even cute. Maybe she hoped that we would find her hot since she could speak a word of "our" language. But then the big bomb, as if there hadn't been enough already, her Asian guy-pal thing (who was off his leash) walked up and she said, "Hey, I'm talking to these Japanese boys. You're Vietnamese... You're dirty..." And the dude just giggled, kissing her ass, and tasting the shit from her buttocks—all the while smiling.

What did we do? We just told her she was fucked up, but her being drunk, she probably forgot about everything.

BY MW



# ► EAT ME

Anyone who's eaten campechana or shrimp cocktail should be able to eat bugs. That's what shellfish is, right? Wrong. Eating the Korean delicacy was fucking gross. The combination of the light and crunchy shell and grainy innards is foul and the dirty aftertaste makes it worse.

Perhaps the most telling moment came when we tried to feed a bug to Eric's dog, Hanako. In previous taste tests she would eat anything, including durian ice cream. Not this time. First she pushed it around with her nose, then she tried to crush it with the side of her face! After that, she walked away.

While we humans were forcing ourselves to eat bugs, gagging and spitting, Hanako instinctively tried to kill them. That made us feel pretty dumb.

BY MW

# ► DISH CHAMP

by ERIC NAKAMURA

Through the intestinal track of every restaurant, there is stratum. It might start at the maitre d' when you first walk into a place, then to your waiter and busboy. Then into the kitchen, there's the chef, his assistant, a potato peeler or two, and runners to bring out the food. But dark in the corner is the lower orifice of the alimentary canal, the one who keeps things clean—the dishwasher. With dishrag in hand, the task is to keep everything from getting disheveled. It's a job that takes stamina, power, concentration, and a lack of creativity. The dishwashers stand alone in some kitchens. They're not part of the food preparation team or food-service tip-hounds. They are the ones who face the mess and clean things up.

Some people place value on the act of washing dishes. It's often used in speeches about finding honor or zen in the most tedious tasks. There's also a zine called *Dishwasher* made by Dishwater Pete whose goal is to wash dishes in all 50 states. He's even washed dishes on an oil rig! But another person stands strong and should also be inducted in the Palmolive Hall of Fame. His disgust for defilement surpasses everyone and it's earned him the one-word nickname of Champion.

Standing atop all who get their hands wet, Champion's been washing dishes since he first entered the American work place after fleeing his native home of Mexico. But unlike most wanderers who walk in and want a job for a month, only to show up shiftless or not at all because they're pussies, this mere man (and I don't know his real name) transformed himself into the greatest of the game.

On the busiest nights when waitresses are running around placing orders, fighting for dishes, and putting rice into bowls; the kitchen cookers are steamed from the heat of the grill; and the busboys are running around wiping everything in sight, Champion can be seen at his post—a corner L-shaped unit made of stainless steel. He might be smiling, waiting for some dirt to pile up.

He paces his work, smoothly taking a sponge to the dishes, trays, and bowls until he fills a palette that's going into the big washer. You might be thinking something like, "That's easy because he's got a machine." But it's hardly the case. Dishwashing

machines don't wipe off the endless leftovers, tempura crumbs, upchucked salivated food, and snot-filled napkins soaked in teriyaki smudge. They really only rinse. When you see whale-blubber crimson lipstick on your glass next time out, you'll realize cleaning takes human hands.

On days when the restaurant gets so busy that there are no more cups, plates, or trays, a yell comes from a waitress like, "Champion, we have no cups." That's when he kicks into maximum overdrive. With the speed, power, and brains of the Six Million Dollar Man, he dips into his bionics and cleans, scrubs, and rinses everything at his arm's length. Seeming him in action is like seeing everything in a blur.

***But dark in the corner is the lower orifice of the alimentary canal, the one who keeps things clean—the dishwasher.***

He's that fast. When he cleans a pile of refuse and crap in minutes, it's a serious spectacle that's insane.

Champion perspires and breaks a dish every now and then, but he's steady. Flashy kids might come up every now and then, showing promise like a young athlete, but they always fall off. The champ always stays the champ.

When performance review time comes up, he's usually the most promotable employee. Starting at the dregs of dishwashing, his next frontier would be to join the masses who make the mess for someone else to clean. He'd get paid more, too. But he always refuses, choosing to remain the world champion of clean plates.

While employees struggle to pay their bills, somehow Champion has bought a house. And in the house are clean dishes.

*"The champ always stays the champ."*



# ► FRINGES

by Martin Wong

Frisco is almost a second home to me, with its own set of family and rituals. First I cruise by Aquarius Records on Valencia to say hi to Andee and company and find out what burrito place is currently hot. Then I cut across the street to Lost Weekend Video to say hi to Adam and see if Lance is in town (if we don't spot him walking around the Mission District first). Mix in some agua fresca, fresh fortune cookies in Chinatown, cousins in Oakland, the Lookout! Store in Berkeley, and maybe a Giant Robot article (Bruce Lee Museum, Maggie Cheung, Martin Wong, Yellow Power people...) or appearance (Stanford, Eastwind Books, Kinokuniya...) and that's a packed and good weekend. But sometimes I actually have time to check out some spots outside that city by a bay...

**1. Historic Area of Auburn:** Between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe sits this retirement haven full of expensive antique and gift shops. On the way in, you'll see a huge statue of a Chinese coolie! In the shopping district is a shoe store that doubles as a sad clown art gallery and a crappy CD store where I found an Ultramagnetic MCs CD for 99 cents in the junk bin! Also check out the super oriental Chinese restaurant.

**2. Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey:** Aquariums are cool and this is the big daddy of them all. The whole place is great, but the drifter section is the best, full of jellies floating and glowing in the currents like bacteria in giant Petri dishes. Ask Eric to show you his home movies of them some time.

**3. Redwood Ice Arena in Santa Rosa:** This complex houses a massive Snoopy Gift Shop, the Snoopy Museum, Charles Schulz' ice rink, and a coffee shop called the Warm Puppy. Some people who grew up in the area say that the cartoonist is a conservative jerk, but Snoopy is cool and so is this place.



# ► RUDE FOOD

by martin wong

## **GRANT LAWRENCE, THE SMUGGLERS**

Okay, I will admit right off the top that I do not have the most "global" diet in the world. That said, my digestive system sometimes reacts violently to foreign foods outside of the, say, grilled cheese and chocolate-chip cookies food group. Especially when I'm far away from home. On the Smugglers' first tour to Japan, my stomach was literally held hostage on a diet of fat noodle soup, fat noodle soup, and fat noodle soup. I refused any and all offerings of sushi, seaweed, or Pocky, fearing the unknown and bizarre culinary world of the Far East. The fat noodle soup was the closest thing I could get to Campbell's Chunky Chicken, so I

***"Squatting like Rae Dawn Chong in Quest for Fire with Grandma watching over me yelling what I assume was profanity, my butt turned into a hot shit faucet..."***

went for it. Unfortunately, after four days of straight soup and fat noodles, my digestive system caught up to me like a cheetah on a lame gnu.

Enter my second Japanese culture shock: the toilets. Most of the places we were staying in Japan were "smaller, older" hotels, which basically meant we were staying at some old lady's house, sleeping on her floor. When my butt decided to erupt like Mount Fuji, I pleaded with our elderly innkeeper to show me her toilet. She grabbed me, practically threw me down a staircase built at a 90 degree angle, and pushed me into a wooden room with no door, and what looked like a miniature urinal

sunk into the floor. Squatting like Rae Dawn Chong in *Quest for Fire* with Grandma watching over me yelling what I assume was profanity, my butt turned into a hot shit faucet, spraying four days of fat noodle soup all over the "toilet basin," my shoes, my socks, my legs, my leg hair, and, to our host's outrage, her kimono. It was on this awful night that I learned two things: always have plenty of fiber in your diet, even in a faraway land, and diarrhea in Japanese is "bishy-bishy."

## **LUIS ILLADES, PANSY DIVISION**

For some reason, people in the US assume that their neighbor to the south has one kind of people, brown. Having grown up in Mexico for a good part of my life, I was witness to the fact that there are indeed many other racial representations in Mexico. In Tijuana specifically, there is a huge Asian population largely made up of Chinese Mexicans. This is a culture that grew out of the disenfranchised Chinese that were used as cheap labor in the building of the US railroad system and then decided that they didn't want to live in a country full of assholes.

So there were kids in my neighborhood that were pure Chinese blood but spoke, ate, cursed, drank, and hung out just like Mexicans with a perfect accent. I bought my second drum set from a teenage kid down the street named Jorge Alberto Chong who loved Pearl Jam and called me "guero" (whitey). His sister was Maria Fernanda Chong and was a total prom queen type snob. Regardless, one of the best cultural developments of the Chinese population in Mexico was the Chinese food. The food stayed true to the typical menu one would encounter in the US. As I have never been to China, I really don't know how authentic the Chinese food in the US really is. However, being in a border town we were able to see the difference between the Chinese food in San Diego and Tijuana. Because Mexico has

***"Hey, what happened to the dog? Of course, our question was answered when no more than 5 minutes later the CERRADO sign was quickly switched over to ABIERTO."***

less restrictions on food preparation, the food was loaded with MSG which made it oh-so yummy. Also, the portions were huge! The food was generally a lot sweeter and a lot saltier when necessary. In general, Mexican-Chinese food, although not an established cuisine itself, is much better than US-Chinese, but a lot worse for you.

The one incident that made me not eat Chinese food for about a year is as follows. My brother and I were at the car wash one day, running errands and sitting around chatting next to a Chinese food restaurant. The restaurant in question was closed at 2 p.m. which is the height of the lunch time in Mexico, and we thought was a bit odd. We were sitting there wondering if this restaurant was going out of business or something. As we were talking, we noticed a stray dog that had walked behind the building was not walking out the other side. Hey, what happened to the dog? Of course, our question was answered when no more than 5 minutes later the CERRADO sign was quickly switched over to ABIERTO. Needless to say, I went a year without the Chinese cuisine, at least.

#### **WES, LIFESUCKSDIE**

My horror story is about the Village Wok (610 Washington Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414). The basic horror story on this place is that several people I know have encountered roaches in their food. Many people, including some of my friends,

***"The lab result showed that there had been a large amount of semen in the food."***

refuse to eat there any more. I have experienced this for myself as well when a live roach crawled right across our table. I was the only one that kept eating, while my friends watched in exaggerated horror and I called them babies. But the real story on this place was the urban legend of the person who had a problem with their food and for some reason thought it was a good idea to take it to a lab. The lab result showed that there had been a large amount of semen in the food.

This seems to be a tale I've heard from elsewhere and nobody seemed to take it too seriously, but

some time last year, a local radio personality thought it would be a good story to tell on the air, as well as to bring up on more than one occasion in that morning crew type fashion. I'm not sure but it could have been the same station responsible for some dumbass comments on the Hmong community that sent everybody into a rage resulting in on-air apologies. The result was a loss of business to the Village Wok resulting in a lawsuit that is still in progress. At the front register, there is a sign posted that says something like, "If you heard any broadcast of (sorry I can't remember what station at the moment) that referred to the Village Wok, please notify your server."

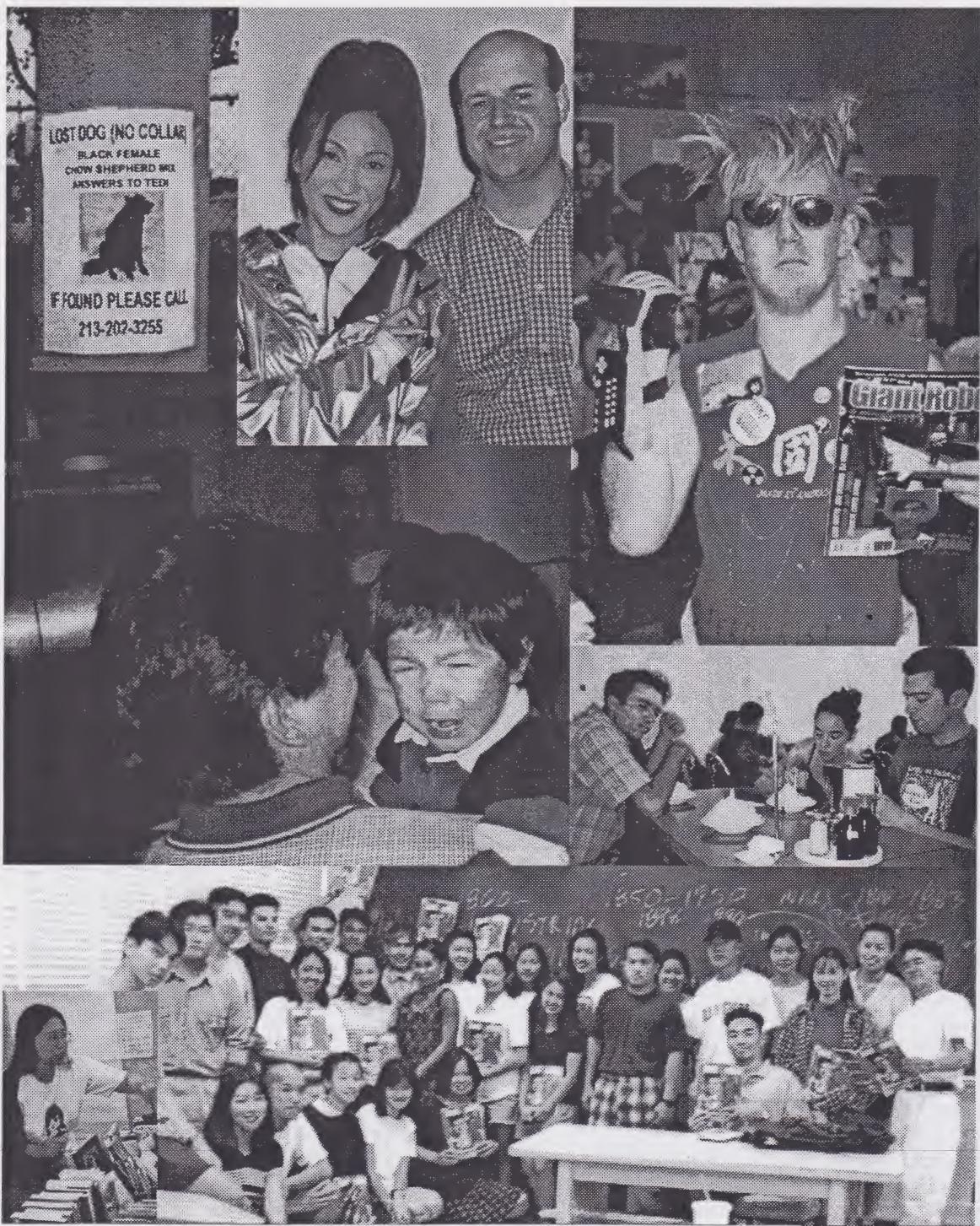
## **► HOMIES! FOR SALE!**

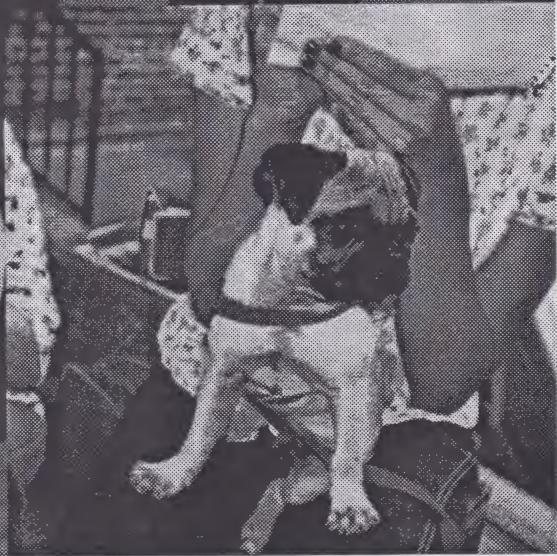
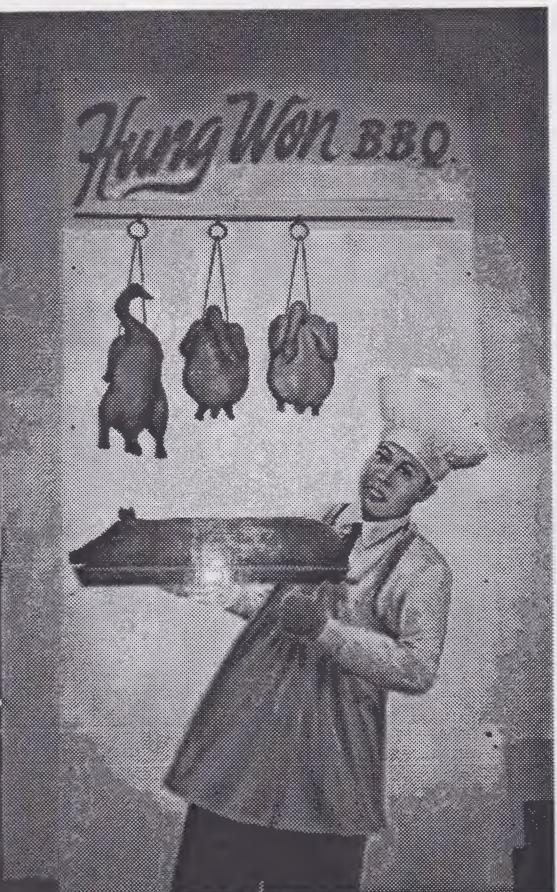
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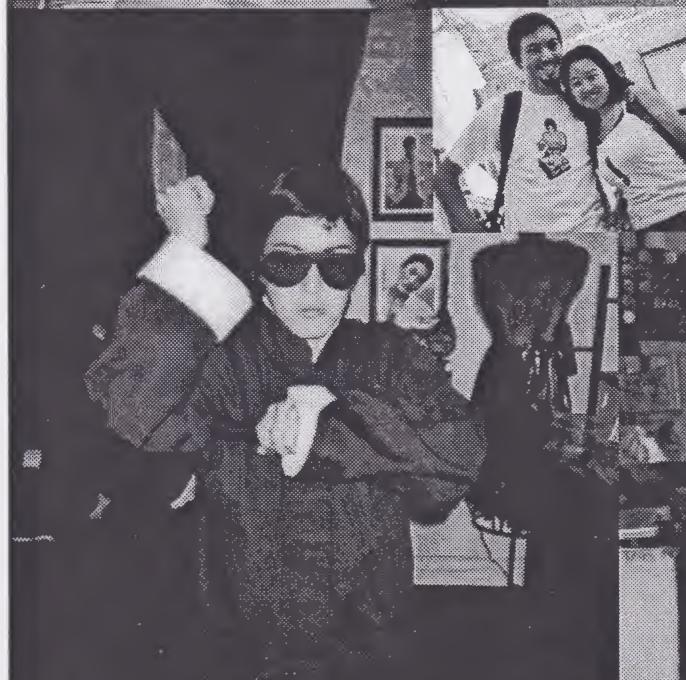
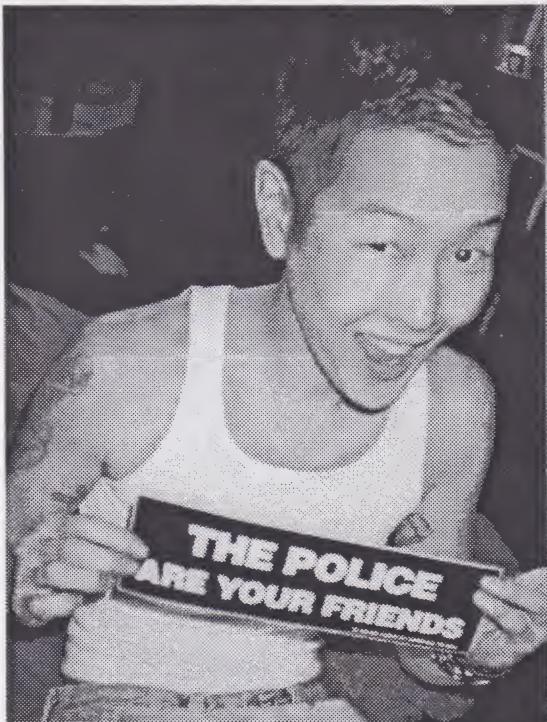












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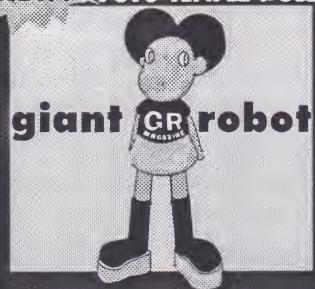
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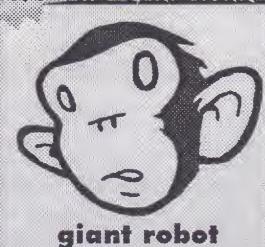
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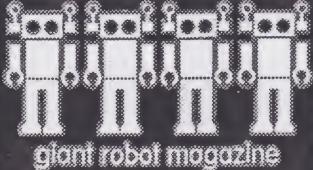


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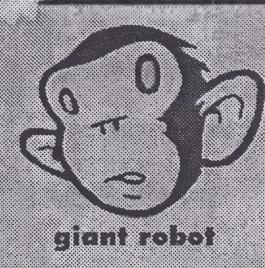
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| BLACK: S M L XL  |      |          |    |
| WHITE: S M L XL, NAVY: X S S M L XL  |      |          |    |
| WHITE: X S S M L XL, NAVY: X S L XL, BLACK: L XL                               |      |          |    |
| WHITE RINGER: X S M L XL   |      |          |    |
| NAVY: X S, BLACK: L XL   |      |          |    |
| WHITE RINGER OR NAVY: X S S M L XL   |      |          |    |
| WHITE RINGER OR NAVY: S M L XL   |      |          |    |
| HOODED ROBOT ARMY [RAH], ROBOTICON [RCN] BRUCE MADE TAPES [BMT] NAVY: L XL XXL |      |          |    |

► US FUNDS ONLY  
Allow 1-3 weeks  
Checks/MO to:  
GIANT ROBOT  
POB 642053  
LA, CA 90064

► SUBTOTAL ▼  
SHIPPING  
\$3.20 PER SHIRT \$4.40 HOODIES  
Overseas  
\$8 PER SHIRT \$12 HOODIES

► TAX  
CA residents add  
8.25% sales tax  
► TOTAL ▼

NAME: .....  
ADDRESS: .....  
ZIP: ..... ALT SIZE: .....  
CREDIT CARD: VISA OR MC NUMBER: .....  
SIGNATURE AS ON CARD: .....



Nikki McClure 1999